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KINSTITUTION: A TOPIA BETWEEN ARCHIVE AND PROPOSAL

By

Topher Lineberry

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Dedication

As it plays a huge role in my thesis work, I would like to dedicate my thesis to my late Grandma, Helen Gaines Howerton Lineberry. An artist herself, I am grateful and honored for her life's work. It feels like she is getting an MFA right here with me. I thank her spirit for guiding me to sobriety.

Acknowledgements

All of my instructors at Hunter College taught me invaluable lessons about myself and my practice. My encounters with each of their rubrics for art and criticism provided me with the gift of deeper resiliency not only for making, but for being myself in the world. I would like to thank them all: Claire Bishop for demystifying "research" and letting me brush her teeth; Andrea Blum for kicking my ass, knocking me down, and helping me back up in my ongoing search for form; Daniel Bozhkov for the communion of disciplined enchantment, its trials and joys; A.K. Burns - my thesis advisor - for going well beyond kicking the tires on my work, even when it required a new transmission; EJ Hauser for helping me rediscover my instinct; Anthony Hawley for his due diligence, generosity, clarity, and spirit; Reiner Leist for interrogating the facts; Paul Ramirez Jonas for taking the time to see and understand my scattered parts of a whole; Mary Mattingly for her grounded visions of transformation and possibility; Dave McKenzie for his excellence as a proactive viewer and sounding board; Catherine Morris for tolerating my rookie frenetics with aplomb; Alex Segade for validating my lexicon and its many other worlds; Howard Singerman for giving me that A; and Nari Ward, for helping me find the strength to own and believe in my own poetics.

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Big shoutout to my cohort in the core group of Decolonize MFA Curriculum (DMFAC). Your strength, brilliance, dedication, and resilience will inspire me long after I leave Hunter College. Thank you for reminding me of work worth doing, and for the hope that institutions aren't just for critiquing, but for transforming.

I acknowledge that my masters education at Hunter College takes place on unceded ancestral Lenape homelands, and recognize the longstanding significance of these lands for Lenape nations past, present, and future.

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Institutional Critique: A Primer

Because my thesis work relates to institutional critique as a set of established contemporary art practices now over half a century old, I provide a brief history here. "Institutional critique" (IC) refers to a set of practices where artists critique the institutions with which they participate. The following "waves" of institutional critique in contemporary art have been assembled through a combination of critical writings and reflections. The basic structure, though, was more recently redeployed by Amin Husain, Nicholas Mirzoeff, and Nitasha Dhillon as MTL Collective for their essay *"From Institutional Critique to Institutional Liberation? A Decolonial Perspective on the Crises of Contemporary Art."*¹

The "first wave" of institutional critique begins in the 1960s and 70s. Institutional critique from this time concerned itself with moving "...toward a concern with ideological structures and frames of the institution itself..." To address these concerns, artists used:

"...techniques of laconic spatial alteration..., sociological mapping..., ironic fiction..., and performative or process-based intervention...By and large, this practice offered its critique from within the institution under scrutiny and was authorized by it."²

¹ MTL Collective, "From Institutional Critique to Institutional Liberation? A Decolonial Perspective on the Crises of Contemporary Art." October. Spring 2018.38.

² MTL Collective, p. 208

This period accompanied the emergence of groups whose politics addressed the historical and ongoing exclusion of representation by art institutions, overlapping with the momentum generated by "...the political imaginaries of the time like those of the antiwar movement, Black liberation, and women's liberation..."³ Such groups include, but are not limited to: Art Workers Coalition (AWC) and Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, Ad Hoc Women's Art Committee, and Black Women Artists and Students for Black Liberation. A necessary conscious antagonism *within* this activist landscape appeared, in addition to the pressures it placed on the institutions it challenged.⁴ The failures of art institutions and the lack of control for artists within them generated new alternative spaces (at least in New York City),⁵ which include: Artists Space, White Columns, the Kitchen, and El Museo del Barrio.

"First wave" Institutional Critique of the 1960s and 70s overlapped with movements like Minimalism and conceptual art. According to Miwon Kwon, as Minimalism reflected the physical and corporeal body of the viewer, "...institutional critique insisted on the social matrix of class, race, gender, and sexuality of the viewing subject."⁶

³ P. 208

⁴ P. 209

⁵ P. 208-209

⁶ Kwon, Miwon. "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity" [October, Vol. 80 (Spring, 1997)] pp. 88

Artists associated with first wave institutional critique include, but are not limited to: Michael Asher, Hans Haacke, Tucumán Arde, Marcel Broodthaer, Mierle Laederman Ukeles, Daniel Buren, Eduardo Favario, Julio Le Parc and Enzo Mari, Robert Smithson, Guerilla Art Action Group (GAAG), Martha Rosler, and Adrian Piper.

Institutional critique continued to evolve during its "second wave" in the 1980s into the early 1990s as:

"...a subset of critical postmodernism...and involved a heightened attention to the violent colonial and racial histories underlying cultural institutions."⁷

This coincided with theoretical shifts in the humanities and social sciences as well, particularly the rise of postcolonial theory.⁸ Other artists and groups reinvigorated the challenge of race and gender inequities by:

"...enacting a politics of representation that addressed the psychic and visual structures of patriarchy - including in the discipline of art history itself."⁹

Queer theory emerged in relative tandem with postmodern art and helped generate not only a response to AIDS as an institutional crisis in and of itself, but productively complicate the structural identitarian politics already in dialogue with institutional critique as a contemporary strategy.¹⁰

⁷ P. 209

⁸ibid.

⁹ ""

¹⁰ ""

Artists from the Second Wave include: James Luna, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Fred Wilson, Guerilla Girls, Rasheed Araeen, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Jenny Holzer, Greg Bordowitz, Félix Gonzalez-Torres, ACT-UP subgroup Gran Fury, and I would also like to add Fierce Pussy.

For the "third wave" of institutional critique - located around the mid-1990s and into the 2000s - many radical potentials were professionalized or domesticated, reflecting "...a lull in social movements in the face of Clintonite neoliberalism."¹¹ What followed was a strand of work which remained critical, "...but it was akin to the 'cynical reason' that compounds, rather than dialectically redeems, defeated models of critique and resistance."¹² Credited to Miwon Kwon by the MTL Collective, they state the challenges faced by institutional critique during this period resulted from neutralizing critical intervention, which rendered artists: "...less an unsettling provocateur than a traveling professional service-provider, formulaically enacting critique-for-hire at one place after another."¹³

Another risk was the removal of a more explicitly political engagement, "...toward a reflexive tarrying with the ironic

¹¹ ""

¹² ""

¹³ P. 210

double-binds, entrepreneurial games, and insouciant subcultures of the art system itself..."¹⁴ Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen places third wave institutional critique with the "overlapping practices" of relational aesthetics, socially engaged art, and tactical media.¹⁵ These practices are partially linked by ways out of the 1980s critiques of representation, which informed parts of the previous second wave of IC.

Artists and groups from the Third Wave include: Art Club 2000, Christian-Philipp Müller, Carey Young, Laura Cottingham, Andrea Fraser, Fareed Armaly, Renée Green, Mark Dion, Maria Eichhorn, Nils Norman, @Mark, RepoHistory, Yes Men, Sub Rosa, Raqs Media Collective, Electronic Disturbance Theater, Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), Bureau d'Études, Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA).

As a kind of prototype sparked from the frustrations of feeling "trapped" by the dead ends and contradictions of third wave institutional critique, the fourth wave developed through what Gerald Raunig calls "instituent practices," which he defines through 'the actualization of the future in a present becoming.'¹⁶ He elaborates:

¹⁴ P. 210

¹⁵ Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. Note on Socially-Engaged Art. *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, No. 53 (2017), pp. 60-72

¹⁶ Raunig, Gerald, and Ray, Gene. *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*. MayFly Books. London, England. 2009. p. xvii

"...`instituent practice' as a process and concatenation of instituent events means an absolute concept exceeding mere opposition to institutions: it does not oppose the institution, but it does flee from institutionalization and structuralization. But while fleeing, `instituent practice' searches for a weapon. Introducing monsters into existing institutions, it gives birth to new forms of institutions, monster institutions."¹⁷

According to MTL Collective on Raunig's instituent practice:

"...the fourth wave of institutional critique works within this tension between dynamic action and the setting up of enduring structures."¹⁸

Agents associated with Fourth Wave Institutional Critique or "instituent practice" include: Occupy Museums, Gulf Labor Coalition (GLC), Global Ultra-Luxury Faction (GULF), Decolonize This Place, Sackler Pain, and W.A.G.E. On a personal note, I am a by-product of an instituent practice often overlooked by these more formalized or "new canon" narratives (which are still geared toward large metropolitan developments and conventional centers of power), Elsewhere Museum in Greensboro, NC. I was their inaugural intern in 2005 from the ages of 14-18. My time at Elsewhere taught me to become promiscuous in form and method as an artist, for which I am forever grateful.¹⁹

¹⁷ Raunig, p. xvii

¹⁸ MTL, p. 212

¹⁹ Much love to Stephanie Sherman and George Scheer, Elsewhere's co-founders, former directors, and long-time mentors and friends.

KINSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE

My work uses vocabularies of model-making and set design to flirt with the aesthetics of Appalachian folk traditions through an emphasis on craft and hand-made process, but with fantastical and garish finish. These architectonic sculptures are made from found and reclaimed wood, plaster, concrete, lighting elements, and finished with different kinds of paint, glitter, sparkles, stickers, or temporary tattoos. This body of work echoes forms and attitudes of world-building one might see in world's fairs or theme parks.²⁰ One will find theaters, swimming pools, towers, mountains, cityscapes, and pavilions. Using scale architectural models and their attendant landscapes, these sculptures are also an idiom of unrealized and unrealizable institutions.

During my graduate studies, I've attempted to broaden the net of Institutional Critique (IC) to include family and kinship structures. Embedded into the legacy of IC itself is an ongoing expansion of "institutional site," elaborated by Miwon Kwon.²¹

One lineage of IC that *kinstitutional critique* specifically

²⁰ As One of my "queer origin stories", I first learned what gay was before a family trip to Disney World, spurred by my father's protest to what my brothers and I were told was "gay and lesbian week" at the park. Evangelical shame and God's disapproval included, we were then told not to drink from the water fountains or "we might get AIDS." As a queer person, self-discovery was marked by a fear of my own body, and an inherent discord with public space. When we did go, I had a sprained ankle in a wheelchair, granting access to the line for visitors with mobility-related disabilities. Theme parks, amusement parks, and other sites of leisure exemplify an institutional "social nexus" which has re-emerged in many different iterations of my art, research, and experience.

²¹ Kwon, Miwon. "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity" [October, Vol. 80(Spring, 1997)](p.89) Kwon identifies this migration of institutional site as a development in the 1980s. She also notes this transformation of institutional site engaging everyday life, as well as spaces, institutions, and issues seemingly unrelated to art, folding itself more into the realm of "the social," as a move into "the public."

attempts to take up is the flexibility of *what kinds* of institutions become the subject-object of criticism and intervention. Advanced by Andrea Fraser, those who work in or are around art in any capacity already have the institution *inside* ourselves. Fraser states:

"But just as art cannot exist outside the field of art, we cannot exist outside the field of art, at least not as artists, critics, curators, etc. And what we do outside the field, to the extent that it remains outside, can have no effect within it. So if there is no outside for us...it is because the institution is inside of us, and we can't get out of ourselves."²²

To this end, if the institution is inside us, it also lives between us.

A large portion of my work has developed the concept I call *kinstitutional critique* (KC), in which kinship is analyzed as an institution, in its own right, as the subject-object of critique and, transversely, serves as a platform from which to critique the institutions it mediates. There is also a great deal of potentially relevant contemporary art and art history dealing with family and kin more broadly, as well as in tandem with modes or traditions of institutional critique.²³ My own attempts

²² Fraser, Andrea. "From the Critique of Institution to the Institution of Critique." *Artforum*. September 2005. (P. 103-104).

²³ I consider a primary work of *kinstitutional critique* to be Adrian Piper's 1988, "Cornered." Adrian Piper's "Cornered" is an installation in the literal corner of a museum. On each wall are her father's contradictory birth certificates - one listing his race as "white" and the other as "octoroon." This family evidence becomes a springboard into a conversation about, no less a result from, the institutions of racism which are, by the same coin, the production sites of race itself. In a philosophical exercise about the social fact of her being Black, a video of Piper in a blue dress plays in a corner with an arrangement of seats for audience members to watch and listen, while a table sits flipped over in front of the video monitor, acting as a barrier between viewers and Piper, while perhaps suggesting the act of flipping it over. The critique of race as a racist institution follows into whatever institution exhibits the video. Especially in 1988, the museum audience is presumably predominantly white - anticipated in her video monologue - creating a relational dialogue with Piper's audience through her spoken exegesis, leaving multiple agents in the installation "cornered" by various architectural, social, and cultural conditions. The video was removed from YouTube in 2014 by the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation in Berlin, where the artist now resides.

to practice IC can be traced to a work I performed as an undergraduate, working as an unpaid intern for an art gallery, where the space became a roller rink by rollerblading through it while my boss was gone. [Image 1-2] I believe this impulse carries through in the architectures of the scale “institutional” models I have built, longing for their purpose to serve the freedoms and abstracted democratic promises of leisure or fun.

Kinship is a foundational part of a long and suspicious tradition of anthropological study. After slogging through a never-ending stream of imperial puddle-jumping fantasies, some have called kinship study its own kind of “bastard algebra” while acknowledging that “kinship is to anthropology what...the nude is to art.”²⁴ I was partially relieved to come across Elizabeth Freeman’s essay on queer kinship that spoke more honestly to my own position and the crisis of kinship study for queers (read: also U.S. American) in the early 21st century.²⁵

Freeman asserts the anthropological relation, or lack thereof,

Other artists, works, and exhibitions to consider include: Patty Chang, *In Love*, 2001; Danh Võ, *Vo Rosasco Rasmussen* 2002-present; Contemporary Art Museum, Saint Louis, *Shoot the Family*, 2007; Guggenheim Museum New York, *Family Pictures*, 2007; Brooklyn Museum, *Extended Family: Contemporary Connections*, 2010; Emily Jacir, *At the Jacir Palace, Bethlehem*, 2012; Wendy Red Star’s collaboration with her daughter, Beatrice, 2013-present; New York Times Style Magazine, “Thirteen Contemporary Artists Portray Their Own Children,” March 18, 2016; Sophie Calle, *Sophie, Monique*, 2014; Artsy, “For These 10 Contemporary Artists, Art Runs in the Family,” Nov. 22, 2015; *Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A.*, 2017; University of South Florida, *Family Affair*, 2015; Casey Jane Ellis, *MAD: Mothers and Daughters*, 2018; Colin Self, *Siblings*, 2018; Jacolby Satterwhite, *PAT*, 2019; Suzanne Lacy, *Dad Lessons*, 2019.

²⁴ Peletz, Michael G. “Kinship Studies in Late Twentieth-Century Anthropology.” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995) pp. 343-372

²⁵ Freeman, Elizabeth. “Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory” Pp. 295-314 in *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies* ed. George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry

of kinship theory to queer theory, albeit in a somewhat dated frame prominently composed of "gays and lesbians." She asks if classic understandings of kinship can be queered, citing Michel Foucault in the emergence of the modern family appearing at the intersection of kinship and sexuality.²⁶

My particular queer approach to kinship structure, however, starts with the normative white, cisheteropatriarchal, Christian, classist family values²⁷ forcefully grafted onto American culture by way of Enlightenment genealogies. As outlined in the introduction of Lisa Lowe's *Intimacies of Four Continents*, citing the work of Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel to position the political economy of 18th century Euro-American colonial worlds, the family was "...the key intermediary *institution* between civil society and the state."²⁸ (emphasis added) Enlightenment genealogies also developed the institutions such as salons and museums, growing into the sites, architecture, and organizations of the contemporary art ecosystem now critiqued by artists in the legacy of IC, as told by Alexander Alberro.²⁹ Extending their mutual ground, Lowe and

²⁶ Freeman, p. 296

²⁷ The phrase "family values" is impossible to ignore as part of the rise of the late 20th Century Moral Majority and served as a particular touchstone of critique for many queer artists during that time, specifically relating to the "culture wars" around NEA funding in the 1980s and 1990s.

²⁸ Lowe, Lisa. *Intimacies of Four Continents*. Duke University Press. Durham, NC. 2014. Pp 28-29

²⁹ Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson. *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*. Alberro, Alexander. "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique". MIT Press. Cambridge, MA. 2009 p. 3

Alberro outline how family and more formal traditionally “critiquable” institutions, respectively, form a relationship to public and private space: precariously stabilized by bourgeois aspirations as a shared or imposed value system. This value system is aesthetically and critically “remodeled” in my own sculptural world through cheap glitz in a gritty place, a queer, campy, satirical, yet sincere set of gestures from the power and failure of the decorative. A surface-level signification of luxury does not mean it has been attained, nor necessarily that it should be.

Informed by my own queer positionings, I seek to fuse Lowe and Alberro’s thinking to redress my own relation and displacements to Southern and Appalachian regionalism, which produce cultural, social, and political morphologies of kinship: often oblique extensions of normative family and their institutional entanglements. And in some instances, kinship arguably emerges precisely *through* these entanglements, such as the webbed relationship to a public prosecutor, Horace Kornegay, who criminalized queers in my hometown of Greensboro in 1957 as part of the Lavender Scare.³⁰ Taking on narratives of kinship couched in the institutional afterlives of the Enlightenment are part of what Donna Haraway advocates for in inheritance as a critical process of disruption, intervention, and formulation.

³⁰ Please see Appendix 1.1 for image and description.

Haraway's extensive mapping of the nature of kinship also charts potential thinking for *kinstitutional critique* beyond my starting place of family in its dominant and normative ideations by examining human and non-human kinship. I also think about and hold space for what I consider truly queer kinship structures such as ballroom houses in Washington D.C. and Atlanta and other Southern centers, or queer communal land projects in Appalachia such as Ida and Short Mountain. However, dominant ideations of kinship still remain significant for grappling with the maintenance of power, privilege, and oppression and thus, may also contain other road signs to possible exit ramps. Rather, my particular bearings of critique may give way to new forms, which I believe has begun in this latest body of work.

To be clear, Enlightenment values are also colonial values which I acknowledge I occupy while also trying to undo. A 2015 conversation with Leela Gandhi and Brighupati Sigh about whether or not to keep scare quotes around the word Enlightenment bolster this assertion of how to mediate contentious legacies inside of which we may also find ourselves simultaneously living. Sigh puts forth the value of such liminality, particularly for the sake of democracy as envisioned or salvaged by post/anticolonial thinkers, actors, and agents.³¹ Gandhi

³¹ Sigh states: "moral imperfectionism, or the ethical and political project of botching one's own perfection for the sake of democracy, is the unexpected way in which anti- or postcolonial thought enters into creative solidarity with the Enlightenment. The scare quotes can come off, and maybe we can still leave our thinking hats on." *Supercommunity*, e-flux, 2017.

levels true democracy and its "inner life" as something beyond an institution, to plot what Sigh suggests as a transnational spiritual *askesis*, or self-discipline, which is "not about world negation or penitence or salvation, but a way of affirming life in this world."³² Kinstitutional critique is an attempt to take up broader political questions from their institutional realities at intimate scales of kinship and family in order to try and bring forth new affirmations of life inside of - and perhaps beyond - them. This is most immediately and instinctively set forth in the recuperation of creative work and life by queers and women in my own family, while bucking against Christian cisheteropatriarchal structures and narratives which constricted, minimized, reduced, or undervalued them in the first place within a region historically sublimated in the U.S. Such recuperative efforts are all interlaced with redressing the lies of whiteness and white supremacy in their familial accumulations, one of which is my own membership in the middle class. The tension of honest appraisal and recognition with the desire to act, reenvision, and upheave are what I seek to display in the topia I build and share, filled with whacky miniature institutional proposals. To echo Gandhi and Sigh's sentiments, it displays a "botched" situation from the get-go.

³² Gandhi and Sigh

An early work of kintitutional critique can be found in *Me n' Skip* (2016) [IMAGE 3]. It is an altered family photograph taken at my cousin's 2012 wedding in Kentucky at a boozeless reception on a former plantation. The family photo is digitally blocked out with white translucency with two circles cut out around different faces in the group. I (right circle) can be seen in this family portrait with a distant relative and North Carolina supervillain, Skip Stam (left circle), who was a Member of the N.C. House of Representatives, 1989-90 and 2003-2016, Republican Leader of the House 2007-2012, and Speaker Pro Tempore 2013-2016. Stam was one of the authors of North Carolina Amendment 1, which was an amendment to the state constitution that effectively banned same-sex marriage, despite already being illegal at the time. The amendment also took away protections for unmarried men and women in domestic arrangements. This wedding photo was taken right after the amendment passed in the same summer. Amendment 1 remained in effect until 2014's *General Synod of the United Church of Christ, et al. v. Drew Reisinger, Register of Deeds of Buncombe County*, and ultimately nullified on a federal level with the 2015 SCOTUS ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. More recently, Skip was a major mouthpiece for 2016's NC House Bill 2 (HB 2), which used trans bathroom panic to deny basic rights and services to the LGBTQIA+ community, while building in language to prevent raising the minimum wage. HB2

also prevented local and state courts from processing claims made on the basis of discrimination not only on gender identity or sexual orientation, but also based on race, age, and ability. HB2 was partially repealed in 2017. Stam claims part of a long line of evangelical "martyrdom", carrying the torch of John and Betty Stam, missionaries who were reported to be publicly beheaded by the Chinese government in 1934. Members of the Stam family continue to work as missionaries to the present day. I extend a special thanks to my uncle, Mike Vandiver, for providing the original photograph.

A more recent example of kinstitutional critique is *Sleep of Desire Produces Mascots* [IMAGE 4-8], a digital video premiered in January 2020 at *Over Yonder* curated by Luca Molanr at Hand Art Center in DeLand, FL. *Sleep of Desire* is a video elaborated from an interview with my father about his relationship to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where he transferred in the 1970s following an unreciprocated confession of love from his gay male friend at University of Richmond. While my father generously and vulnerably reflects on his college experiences -- an evangelical Christian studying music and composition with oblique and distanced relation to a newly semi-conspicuous gay culture in the South -- my own questioning and presence as visibly queer offspring produce an intergenerational and ideological tension (wearing my father's

vintage rainbow "Duke" polo shirt for our interview adds to this). The work's title references Goya's famed "Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," but invoked throughout is Duke University's mascot - the Blue Devil - as institutional drag and ambiguous site for projection and embodiment of desire: repressed, monstrous, campy, or something else entirely. The video also incorporates photos and video footage of Duke's campus to further haunt an interfamilial history of Southern space-time. A possible post-graduation sequel may be in the works, which would result from contacting the person who confessed his love to my father in the 1970s.

Helen Gaines Howerton Lineberry: Towards an Art History [IMAGE 9-23] is a project which carries into my current thesis work. In summer 2018, I started producing an art history of Helen Gaines Howerton Lineberry (b.1919, d.2012), who also happens to be my late Grandma (due to familiarity, I will refer to her as Helen). This involves locating, gathering, documenting, editing, arranging, cataloguing, researching, and writing about her entire life's work. For a number of reasons during my MFA, this project has not found an easy home in Hunter College's department of Art & Art History: it lives in the amperсанд of the department's name, hobbling along in fits and starts. After graduating, I hope to produce a monograph with essays, submit to archives, and perhaps curate an exhibition.

PLACE AND KIN: BETWEEN ARCHIVE AND PROPOSAL

Many strains of research have emerged from searching for an interpretive frame for Helen's work, which includes the inadequacies and possible refusal of art history as a discipline to understand the American South and Appalachia from the early and mid-20th century and into the present beyond "Outsider art", "visionary art," "folk art", or the occasional vacuous or dislocated metropolitan romances with Black Mountain College.³³ Helen made work in Asheville, NC next to Black Mountain College during the prime of its operation, but there's no evidence of her involvement, presenting one of many conundrums of how to

³³In a 2014 article for *Our State Magazine* titled "The Mythic School of the Mountain: Black Mountain College," Joseph Bathanti writes: "Among the American public and academic community at the time, not to mention the rather suspicious Buncombe [County] locals, there was a general lack of interest in Black Mountain [College]." Bathanti reprises: "Many local Buncombe [County] citizens regarded Black Mountain [College] with suspicion and disdain." In the 2018 exhibition catalogue for *Central to Their Lives: Southern Women Artists in the Johnson Collection*, Daniel Belasco writes Black Mountain College "...attracted impressive global talent both as faculty and students. However, few native Southerners went there, perhaps because its curriculum was considered too experimental."

From *The Handcraft Revival in Southern Appalachia, 1930-1990* by Gary Barker: "Anni Albers was from the controversial Black Mountain College...in 1933, a free-spirited institution that drew a talented, outspoken faculty, whose thoughts and actions outraged the conservative, little Carolina community...David Whisnant, comparing Black Mountain College and the John C. Campbell Folk School in *All That Is Native and Fine*, writes that 'If Black Mountain [College] people shared any estimate of the local people and culture, it appears to have been one of contempt. Students seem to have in the main shared Peggy Bennett Cole's feelings that coming across Black Mountain teacher Josef Albers in '[a] hillbilly setting, in the Southern Baptist convention country of the Tarheel State was like finding remnants of an advanced civilization in the midst of a jungle.'"

Countering some of these flippant and perhaps dangerous attitudes, the Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center produced an exhibition in 2018 titled, *Black Mountain College and Black Mountain, North Carolina: When 'Town' Meets 'Gown'* organized by Anne Chesky Smith.

position her work. It's quite telling that the studied artist and art history student might proclaim Black Mountain College as a radical model of democracy in the Appalachian South, which in many regards it was. From this same education, though, it's quite another to omit other Appalachian institutional histories which modeled democracy in its most direct forms by and for local community members, most notably Highlander Folk School, later Highlander Research and Education Center.³⁴

Through craft, my flirtation with some of the regional aesthetic associations in a sculptural world is one part prickly embrace, one part sincerity, bringing forth a twang in visual objecthood repressed and purged from my speech long ago. An unexpected art history has emerged through multiple Appalachian women on both sides of my family, as the pursuit of "craft" during their lifetimes limited a serious or thorough engagement with their work, much less a concrete marking and collecting of their labor. While many of my methods, actions, and gestures are grounded by critique, I also consider an art history of Helen G.H. Lineberry as an act of critical *kinstitution-building*(KB).

³⁴ *You Got to Move*. Dir. Lucy Massie Phenix. Milliarium Zero Films, 1985. Film. This documentary is one of the most direct ways to learn about Highlander Folk School's history. In 1961, backlash by the state of Tennessee closed the Highlander Folk School after successfully providing training and education to many of the prominent leaders of the civil right movement, many of whom are now household names like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr, and John Lewis. It reopened in a new location under the name Highlander Research and Education Center. Opened in 1932, Highlander has also focused on labor rights and unionizing, literacy, strip-mining, pollution, immigration, and LGBTQ+ issues. In 2019, Highlander's main offices and part of its archive were set on fire and vandalized with white supremacist symbols painted on the pavement nearby.

The search for a cultural and geographic frame inspires much of my thesis work. An open secret is that many of the sculptures are literally made from disassembled or repurposed painting frames and stretchers. These elements were all found: surplus of a New York City graduate art program and its invisible insistence on medium hierarchy i.e. "painting and 'everything else.'" The treatment of much of the structures and landscape are finished with both real and faux-concrete treatment, echoing the floors upon which they will stand in the 205 Hudson gallery, conversing with the institutional space in which they are displayed. Each sculpture or set is configured on a "landscaped" platform, and has a light fixture attached to the bottom of it, designed to look as if it is floating above the concrete ground, elevated by short and semi-hidden stilts.

Images, gestures, and characters occupy this "small world" that have been re-translated from the 1929 drawings of a 10-year-old Helen G.H. Lineberry. Among many conceivable interpretations, Helen's 1929 childhood drawings reflect the forging of femme identity in the 1920s Appalachian South.³⁵ It is clear that Helen consumed images of women from rapidly shifting mass media at the time: print such as newspapers, books, and pulps; radio; silent film and later talking pictures. Childhood depictions of cowboys, gentlemen, flappers, pilots, cowgirls,

³⁵ During a studio visit on December 4, 2018, Jasbir Puar came to my studio and immediately pointed out anxieties around white femininity in Helen's work.

princesses, teachers, women lounging and smoking cigarettes, applying makeup, and a keen eye for emerging fashions evidence Helen's own cultural landscape of gendered ideals. Her drawings reflect her own contemporary popular myths of femininity. Within and in-between these myths, however, Helen provides psychic insight into underlying social and interpersonal *tensions*: a girl slapping a male figure in the face (a sectioned-off ballerina dances underneath); a woman hitting her husband in the head with a rolling pin after cutting her hair short (en vogue with the flapper cutting off historically long female hair as a symbol of women's growing independence); a male figure bucked into the air by a horse, the impact marked by a streaming cartoon cluster of multi-colored stars; a woman tied up and blindfolded; another woman held at gunpoint by a man; in between it all are the platonic American ideals of heterosexual love: men and women kissing, holding hands, and some getting married.

While reared in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, 10 year old Helen filled or marked on every single page of an empty insurance bookkeeping yearbook (at least 365 pages), which I have digitally reproduced. Using this book as a kind of codec, I have traced and re-colored with colored pencils a selection of Helen's childhood drawings by hand, scanned and printed them on transparency paper with other translucent materials, laminated them, and turned them into

"flat" free-standing cartoons. Almost all of Helen's characters are drawn in profile. In becoming two-sided pictorial objects, these cartoons play to a longer western art historical operation of the term "cartoon": originally an image of a painting or drawing that becomes "flipped" or doubled once it's translated into a tapestry. No tapestries are involved in this final project, but the art historical process of the cartoon as a doubled image merges here with the contemporary understanding of them as still and moving images which may be considered cultural by-products of an American unconscious. As unconscious images, the translucent cartoons of this topia are doubled in order to recognize or embody the various shadows of self³⁶ abundantly expounded in psychoanalytic literature. American pop-culture provides us with more accessible illustrations by way of Bizarro World from Superman comic books, which is an imagined "backwards" version of Superman's world claiming complete negation, while paradoxically "doubling-down" on American logics of race and gender – amplifying systems of whiteness and patriarchy.³⁷ Or in the case of Jordan Peele's 2019 film, *Us* – a play on "U.S." – the funhouse mirror structure links to the

³⁶ When I was 4, Helen and I were walking in the country. Facing our shadows, she moved towards me. Her shadow crossed paths with mine and she said, "I stepped on your shadow."

³⁷ Binder, Otto. "The Son of Bizarro." *Superman*, vol. 1, #140, DC Comics, 1960

repressed and oppressed underground architecture of our own undoing and its inhabitants: ourselves.³⁸

While celebrating Helen's drawings in her fierce femme salt, humor, joy, and creativity, her realities as a white girl in Jim Crow Appalachia simultaneously and necessarily require critical reappraisal as they are brought forward into a new kinstitutional topia. Subjecting these transformed pictorial cartoon objects to translucency creates a lighting effect that harkens to stained glass as well as ghostliness. The skin of the cartoon figures have all been filled with a particular morasse of color (light blue, orange, green, and purple), clunkily marking whiteness - originally drawn on white copy paper before their material transformations. What's left on the cartoon bodies is an effect of rotting flesh, a possible ghoulish nature in the beyond, or an otherworldly mutation. Subjected to translucency, the whiteness of the images may read on their way to becoming what bell hooks proposes whiteness as a "benevolent absence."³⁹ A contradiction, or perhaps a scrambled order of operations, emerges in how to call attention to and visibilize the lie of whiteness as an often invisible structure while also seeking to abolish it.

³⁸ Us. Dir. Jordan Peele. Universal Pictures, 2019. Film.

³⁹ hooks, bell. "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination." *Displacing Whiteness: Social and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Ruth Frankenberg. Duke University Press. Durham, NC. 1997.

The clothes and other objects from Helen's world are mostly filled in with a psychedelic pattern: inspired by layering the regional "counter-culture" character of Asheville, NC from the late 20th and early 21st centuries onto these images from the 1920s.⁴⁰ In addition to being read as queer, it is also my ideosyncratic shorthand denoting spiritual experience. Drawings of animals and non-human life may suggest some of the openings for kinship alluded to by way of Donna Haraway and the post-human potentials of kinstitution. Many of the reinterpreted figures, marks, and objects from Helen's drawings occupy this world by way of moveable plastic stands, typically found in games or other playsets. Audiences potentially move these parts around, ultimately introducing a variable of unforeseen play into the work. As "floating" semi-stilted landscapes in which these drawings live, the sculptures may also be viewed as islands or stations. The possibility emerges for these moveable cartoon objects to move between locations or centers.

As her genderqueer grandchild now living in New York City, I hope to link arms with Helen and envisage a world for us, though specifically not *just* for us. This critical kinstitutional proposal affirms queer and femme life and challenges white supremacy, with a working discernment that

⁴⁰ Joel Schumacher is very interested in this kind of layering, particularly in "Lost Boys" as a queer dialogue with the legacy of 1960s counter-culture in the 1980s. Mike Kelley is also a firm believer in a more aggressive counter-culture disarrangement.

Helen and I occupy the position of what Amanda Seales phrases as "happening to be white" instead of "believing we are white."⁴¹ It is earnest, but not necessarily innocent. Aware of my work in part lineage of speculative architecture,⁴² this world is neither dystopian or utopian. It is simply toplan, as in, simply a place. The responsibility for decisive collective outlooks and universalizing ethics is not real, even in a miniature proposal world. I alone cannot decide or decipher what is best or worst writ large. I would only offer stingy wayward foolishness to put my totality onto you. But this world is fun, because fun is a measure of freedom. This world is also a little dangerous, nasty, uneasy, shameful, healing, joyful, and yes, spiritual. It glitters and growls and you're invited.

The reality modeled here more conceptually lives between the world of proposal and archive. Proposal emerges through the sculptural language of the maquette and model - the "institutions" - and the archive, from producing an art history of Helen G.H. Lineberry. Even though proposals and archives form a broader arc of my work, they uniquely converge here as interdependent realities. I offer you a world bound by the vision of repatterning historical narrative (archive), projected

⁴¹ "Amanda Seales: I Be Knowin'." HBO Max. Streaming. Jan. 18 2019.

⁴² "Speculative architecture" refers to architectures which aren't necessarily intended to exist, but ask broader questions of space and world-building. It can be found in the work of Archigram, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Mike Kelley, Vito Acconci, Kambel Smith, Lori Nix, Isa Melsheimer, Yin Xiuzhen, Simon Rodia, Vollis Simpson, and Julie Mehretu.

into impossible architectures or institutions (proposal).
Prequel and sequel are simultaneous speculations.

The archive has been a place of investigation and intervention in my work, stemming from a deep desire to reformulate historical understandings and evidence. This has become a way to understand myself or my relations to the world, with a focus on ethical revisionism and the reparative (though not necessarily reparations proper). In resituating history as an active living process, perhaps the future has a fighting chance to become more equitable.

Work related to archives can be seen in *Lincoln Electric Park: A Submission to the Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri* (2017) [IMAGE 25]. Completed over two years, this work is a public digital document and limited edition book that runs 84 Pages. Communicating with the Black Archives of Mid-America in Kansas City, MO, an absence of public record and memory was located in the form of Lincoln Electric Park. Operating under Jim Crow, Lincoln Electric Park was an African-American amusement park between 19th and 20th Street at Woodland Avenue in Kansas City, Missouri. The park stood adjacent to what is now the 18th and Vine Jazz District: a historically Black neighborhood since the late 19th century and into the mid-20th. Opened in 1915, current records suggest Lincoln Electric Park ran for three seasons, most likely closing

in 1917. Evidence of Lincoln Electric Park in local archives has long been absent, whitewashed out of local memory. Such evidence was recently compiled, annotated, and submitted to the Black Archives of Mid-America at the end of 2017: a host of information recovered mainly from newer digital sources and databases. A primary worker in developing this document, my role is specifically not author or owner, but compiler, as this information belongs to everyone. This work is also a reminder of the power of white supremacy and anti-Blackness, which have buried or otherwise erased entire amusement parks. Please see footnotes for URL to the document.⁴³

An ongoing project started in 2018, another work directly related to archives is *Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh* [IMAGE 26-31]. In "municipal drag" as Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter, Lois Lane, I went into the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh to uncover information about the 1957 "Morals Trials", which took place in my hometown of Greensboro. The Morals Trials was one of the most invasive episodes of the Lavender Scare - part of the Red Scare - in which alleged homosexuals were outed and prosecuted, viewed as extensions of a communist threat to national security. In Greensboro, 32 alleged men who have sex with men (MSM) were

⁴³ Link to *Lincoln Electric Park: A Submission to the Black Archives of Mid-America*: tinyurl.com/lincolnelectricpark1

charged with "Crime Against Nature." Of those charged, 24 alleged MSM were successfully convicted and imprisoned between 5 and 20 years, many forced to work on highway chain gangs. Lois Lane was able to collect most of the names (some redacted) of those convicted from microfilm of the original court docket minutes. Lane will soon open up all individual identifiable case files. Photographs were taken by Taylor Marissa Hoard and myself.

I have become the "curator", "archivist", and "institutionalizer" of Helen's work framing it through queer, feminist, and critical race lenses. Activating the archive as a transformed and rearticulated set of images and symbols within a miniature set, though, is an opportunity to understand my own particular relationship to Helen's work, grounded by kinship. In challenging and seeking to undo cisheteropatriarchy of a normative family structure, this work situates a place to materialize and mediate a matriarchal iconography. The divide across the gendered realities of Helen and myself is not as wide as many prefabricated notions to which skeptics might wish to cling. While I technically experience male privilege by way of my socialization and often the distorted legibility of my body - to which I must remain accountable and responsible - parts of this are also very harmful and damaging to myself as a

"beneficiary." Helen and I have both had to fight back against the imposition of men.

As a genderqueer faggot, the relationality set forth in Larry Mitchell's "The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions" clearly and boldly honors the paths forged by women in order to establish solidarity across patriarchal displacements. Throughout Mitchell's book are intervals titled "Women Wisdom," one of which starts out:

"The strong women told the faggots that there are two important things to remember about the coming revolutions. The first is that we will get our asses kicked. The second is that we will win."⁴⁴

By all accounts, Helen may not have been a radical feminist, but her negotiations with Southern patriarchy as evidenced in her drawings, demonstrate a strength I find revolutionary.

Proposal became a recurrent form that originally emerged from the endless bureaucracy of art applications and institutional pandering, by which I have so far been rejected. However, they became a mode for imagining things in the world that don't necessarily *have* to exist. Proposals live in their own "in-between" imaginary space as potentials that also seek to challenge or intervene in the imaginary itself. While not all of my "proposal works" were intended for exhibition and grant applications, they emerged as a kind of idiom of intermediary or

⁴⁴ Mitchell, Larry. "The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions." Nightboat Press. 2019

speculative realities: what is, what could be, what should be, and what can't be.

One particular work crossing both proposal and institutional critique lives in one of several iterations from an ongoing project *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks: Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer* [IMAGE 32-35]. On my mother's side, my ancestors, Lillie Shull Dougherty, Dauphin Disco Dougherty, and Blanford Barnard Dougherty started a teaching college in the late 19th century which grew to become what is now Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina in Watauga County. Needless to say, this has been a complicated ball to unravel, but has led me to seek out questions related to race, class, gender, and settler colonial history that are both at odds with many "outsider" assumptions as well as complicit in larger social and political frameworks. Work surrounding this exploration has been towards a proposal for exhibition and campus programming through the Turchin Center for Visual Arts at Appalachian State. One such proposal has already been rejected. The title of this collection of work originally sought to encounter and unsettle ASU's mascot, "Yosef" the mountaineer, an aggressive fleece-skinned white male derived from regional historical lore as a figure key to de-indigenizing and settling the Appalachian mountains.⁴⁵ Through historical research, a

⁴⁵ The phrase "unsettling the mountaineer" was inspired by Stephen Pearson's use of it. Pearson, Stephen. "'The Last Bastion of Colonialism:' Appalachian Settler Colonialism and

collection of "hologram proposals" were arranged as a starting point for workshops and discussion with multiple student groups on campus in order to reimagine the symbolic order of the institution (which are connected to more "real" imbedded institutional values) and its public space: an as-of-yet unactivated social practice.

In many ways, my thesis work attempts to provide an additional outlet for the inadequacies of contemporary art and art history to fully reckon with U.S. regional and provincial inequity, even in ceaseless claims to an expanding global understanding.⁴⁶ I also hold gratitude for recent exhibitions and scholarship that have already sought to fight against such a lop-sided reality like *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South* (2014), *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art* (2016), *Central to their Lives: Southern Women Artists in the Johnson Collection* (2018), and *Outliers and American Vanguard Art* (2018), which specifically redirected narratives of "outsider art" more

Self-Indigenization. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. 37(2): 165-184. January 2013.

⁴⁶ Zion, Amy and Fisher, Cora. "Regionalism Versus Provincialism: Agitating Against Critical Neglect in Art World Peripheries." *Momus*. April 18, 2016
An independent curator formerly based in British Columbia, Zion promoted an interrogation away from "...the false, binary relationship between center and periphery (or local vs. global)..." Zion discourages the falsehood of center and periphery because it endorses the global artworld as a singular region of distinct cultural histories. The falsehood distinguishing local and global culminates in the overlapping of said histories, risking homogeneity upon contact. Zion encourages, questions, and challenges us: "Can we cultivate multiple regions and acknowledge the differences between them, including the unequal access to various resources, without setting them within this kind of oppositional relationship? There is as much violence in 'saming' as there is in 'othering.'" <https://momus.ca/regionalism-vs-provincialism-agitating-against-critical-neglect-in-artworld-peripheries/>

broadly. By lop-sided I mean an ongoing uneasiness in how Appalachia and the American South become part of (and stay separated from) contemporary art and art history: yet another institutional by-product to critique. Bringing these questions to New York City, however, lands me in between a complicity in re-exposing particularities of an already-vulnerable regional culture on the one hand,⁴⁷ bolstered by the agency and narrative of queer migration from the South and into the Northern industrialized metropole on the other.⁴⁸ As another geographic and cultural site between realities, a miniature world provides a space where you might not see yourself otherwise. It becomes an institution to negotiate, experiment, and play.

⁴⁷ Oft-cited and oft-debated, messy theories of "internal colonialism" continue to haunt Appalachian Studies since its inception in the 1970s from Helen Matthew Lewis' collection: Lewis, Helen Matthews. *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*. Appalachian State University. Boone, NC. 1978. The theory has been used and adapted to explain patterns of geographic power difference in the U.S. more than any hard and fast rule of "inside and outside," much less "colonizer and colonized" as resulting from a *literal* settler colonialism. With no account of indigenous sovereignty, much of this is done through the proposition of land ownership. In the late 1970s and early 80s, almost half of Appalachian land was owned by agents, companies, or persons who do not reside in the region as determined by the Appalachian Regional Commission's Land Ownership Task Force. As a result, extraction defines a primary connection to "outside" or proxy locales, or those who are "from off," as they say in the Blue Ridge. Asserting reflexivity into the theory's initial publication was the suggestion of Appalachia instead as an "internal periphery" (which is still problematic).

From *Dixie be Damned: 300 Years of Insurrection in the American South* by Saralee Stafford and Neal Shirley, the American South is positioned as a fecund site for insurrection by anarchists, who have tried to place the region more broadly within colonial/anticolonial relations with different geographic controls, resulting in "overlapping but conflicting interests" between dominating agents, producing a "hybrid system of discipline and control..." (pp. 256)

⁴⁸ Cue Bronski Beat "Smalltown Boy" from the 1984 album, *Age of Consent*. Chris E. Vargas' piece, "Cry Boy Cry" explores how Bronski Beat's song became an iconic cultural text and gay anthem about queer migration, part of feeling forced to run away from home. The industrial metropole as a site of queer convergence has been at least partially explicated by John D'Emilio's essay, "Capitalism and Gay Identity." While this sentiment is true for my own experience, metropolitan conceptions of the American South - much less its mountains - often exclude the region's own advocacy.

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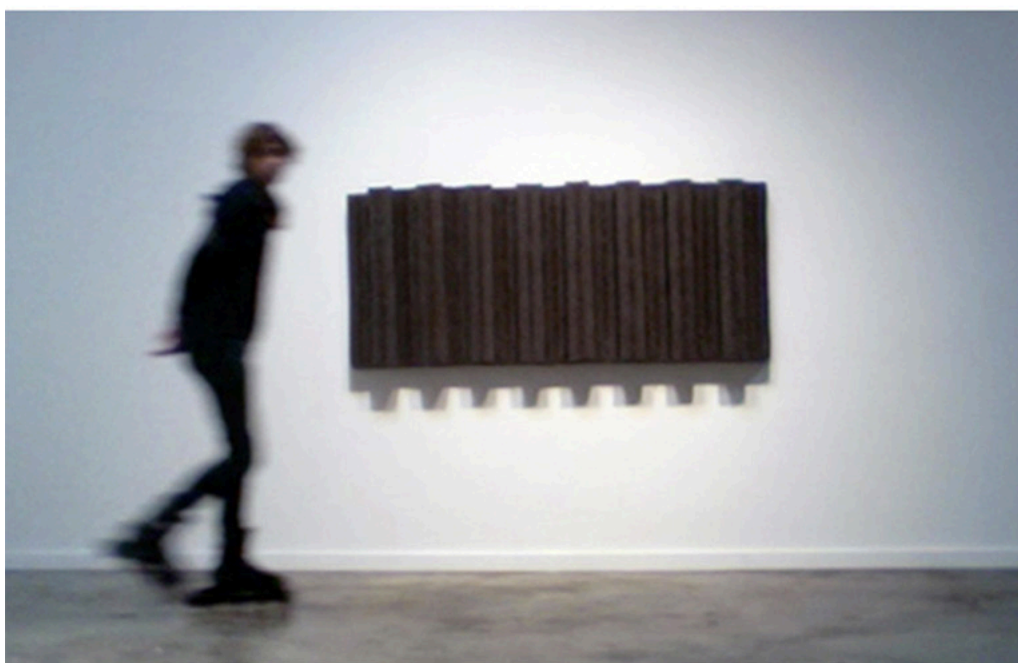


IMAGE 1-2: *White Cube Roller Rink/A Leisurely Act of Free Labor, Performative Intervention*, dimensions and duration variable, 2011.



IMAGE 3: *Me n' Skip* - Archival Inkjet Print of Digitally Altered Photograph
- 19" X 13" - 2012/2016

Sleep of Desire Produces Mascots

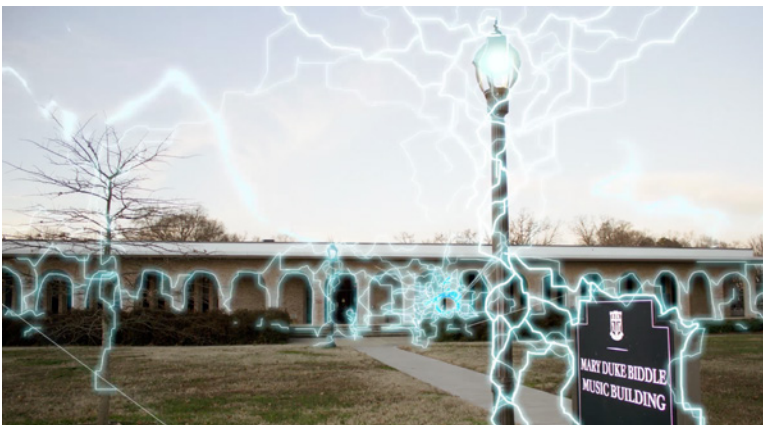


IMAGE 4-8

Selected Stills from *Sleep of Desire Produces Mascots*, Digital Video, 12:47, 2019-2020 and reference image.

Images in at center top of page and in the left column are selected video stills. Image on top of left column represents a base visual for a large portion of the video, which has been placed next to Francisco Goya's 1799 "Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," from which the title was also inspired.



IMAGE 9



IMAGE 10

Images above and on the following page are taken from the digital fascimile of childhood drawings by a 10-year-old Helen Gaines Howerton Lineberry in 1929. These and other drawings are used as source material for parts of my thesis installation, as described in the main body.

Helen was the only girl amongst her siblings, growing up with four brothers on an Asheville estate. Their life in the early twentieth century reverberated many late 19th century developments of the American Gilded Age: termed by historians in the Roaring Twenties in which Helen lived her formative childhood years. She was born the year before the 19th Amendment culminated the women's suffrage movement, coming into an unprecedented landscape of gender and identity in the 1920s and beyond. It was a time in which the "New Woman" came into being. As discussed in "Suffrage, Social Activism, and Women Artists of the South" by Evie Terrano in the exhibition catalogue for *Central to their Lives* about the developments of the 1910s, the "New Woman" - such as that typified by the South Carolina branch of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage - "...was often associated with leftist radicalism and was striving toward equal rights and sexual liberation." (p. 30)



IMAGE 11



IMAGE 12

While my Grandma may not have been directly involved in later iterations of such politics, namely feminisms of the latter 20th century, the suffrage movement and the cultural transformations around it undoubtedly cleared many paths for her life, and in treading them cleared paths for others.

The cultural and social ideas of femininity Helen came into grappled with tradition amidst the momentum of women's rights benefited by mostly white, wealthy spheres, which continued to play itself out in American and European landscapes. These ideas contain many patriarchal mechanisms for the expectation of women. However, family members also posit Helen had to fight for her own femininity in a male-dominated environment, and she used art and culture as one of many ways to do it. Economic gains during the roaring twenties corresponded to the continued gains after the women's suffrage movement. Women's contributions to the market as workers and producers - underpaid or not at all - were more formally met with validation as consumers. Such validation has historically been key to expanding and containing democratic recognition in the U.S., rather than a purely "civic" or "civil" ideal of democracy. Mass production and hard-fought social and political gains led to women holding unprecedented power as buyers in the early 20th Century: seen in part through emerging modern women's fashion, to which Helen Gaines Howerton Lineberry was quite adept.

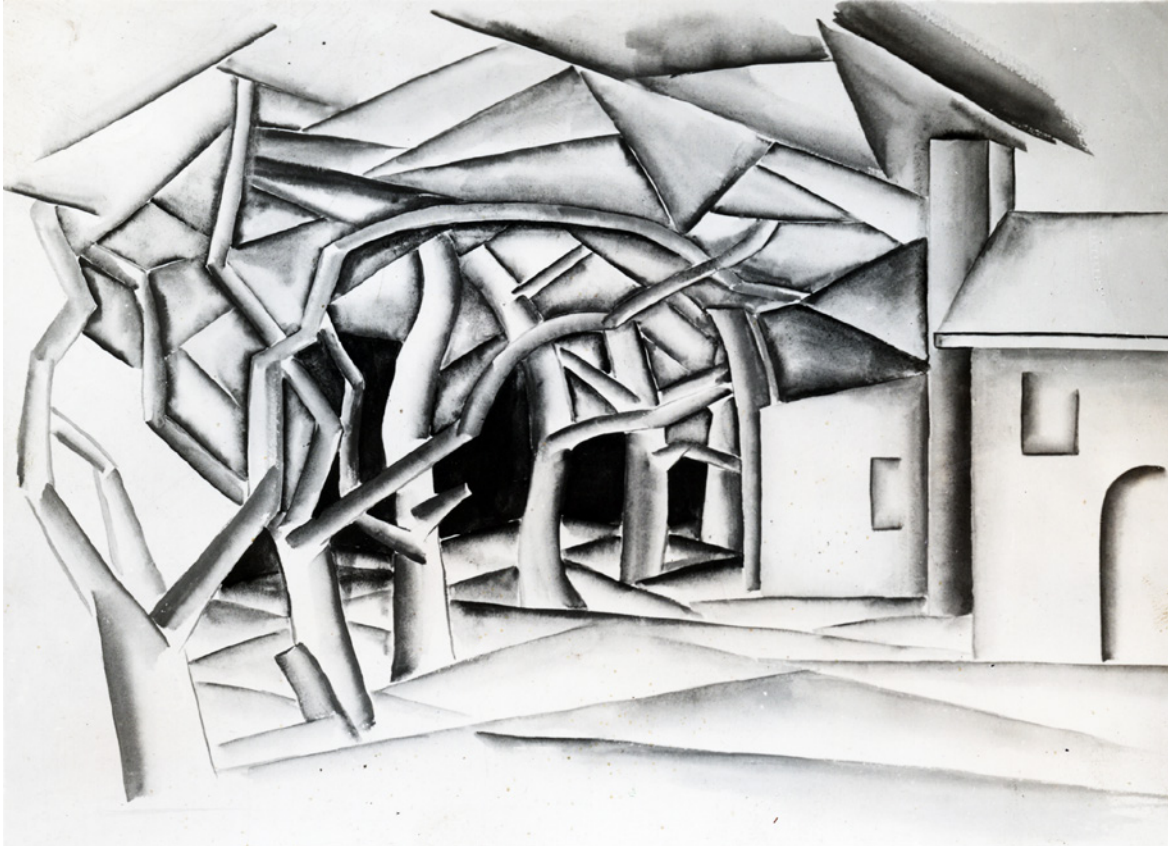


IMAGE 12

The above image was likely created by Helen in 1938 at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina's early years at the Beaufort Art Colony with Professor Gregory Ivy.

From Daniel Belasco's essay in *Central to their Lives* titled "Eyes Wide Open: Modernist Women Artists in the South," the author revisits Southern women artists within art historical conceptions of Modernism. Belasco's "ism" of Modern and his genealogy of feminist traditions may require extra attention, but he lays some helpful groundwork. Graduating in 1940 from the Woman's College (W.C.) of the University of North Carolina (present-day UNCG), Helen Howerton Lineberry fits into a timeline of what Belasco would consider the second generation of modernist women artists in the South. While multiple contexts and historical events corroborate Helen as a "modern" artist, her schooling is of particular note in establishing her practice.

"The second generation of Southern women modern artists - those born in the early twentieth century - was more ethnically diverse than its predecessor and included women of African-American, Jewish, and other backgrounds. They came from middle- and upper-class families and did not need to travel to Europe to pursue advanced art education, World War II having made such journeys impossible. The importance of Southern institutions of higher learning cannot be overstated. Little in mainstream culture encouraged women to excel in the visual arts beyond producing practical handicrafts or visionary folk art. Only colleges and universities provided opportunities for professional development in the arts. Once larger numbers of women began teaching in degree-granting art programs in the 1920s, they were able to mentor young women and establish new female-to-female lineages that would expand what was once an exclusively male and white heritage." (page 54)

Of both generations of modern women artists in the South, Belasco qualifies: "Southern women overcame low expectations of their ability to make fine art of consequence. They were often born to money and benefited from familial status and racial privilege." (p. 53: "Racial," read: "white.")

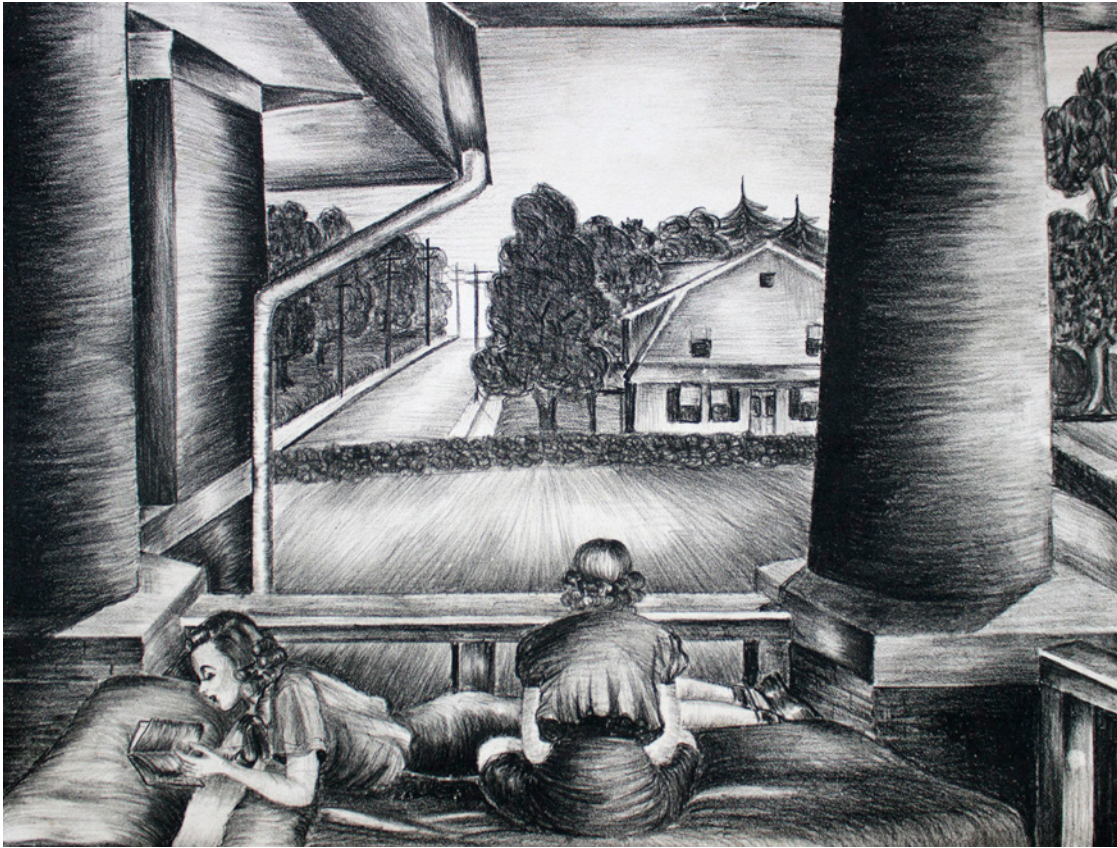


IMAGE 13

Helen Howerton Lineberry made this lithograph print from a drawing taken on the front porch of a dormitory house on Wilson Avenue in Greensboro's College Hill district. An excerpt of the description on the back of it states:
 "1938 - Women's Dormitory at Women's College N.C. (W.C.) Porch where we moved our beds outside -
 we slept - studied - enjoyed the rain and the snow..."

The sense of freedom and camaraderie are palpable. Of particular interest to Helen's work is a reflection of women's higher education opening up potentials for homosocial interaction. The word *homosocial* is used here in its broadest and most literal sense. However, of the many possibilities for new exchanges from unprecedented interactions between women - such as Belasco's identification of female-to-female art lineages in Southern higher education - were also the homosexual. While Helen regaled me with fond tales of skinny dipping with her female art friends at the Beaufort Art Colony (also on record in a 1990 oral history by UNCG), she was not necessarily involved in the latter sexual extension of the homo. Having attended the Woman's College of North Carolina within ten years of my Grandma's graduation, Jill Johnston reflects from her seminal 1973 work, *Lesbian Nation*:

"But we were certainly a bunch of wonderful bandits in north carolina. The place we all ended up that year was the women's college in greensboro where apparently many young women flocked from all over the carolinas to study mostly home economics. The bunch I fell in with were the sensitive fucked up poet and painter types, a readymade contingent of tightlipped lesies, a whole nest of queers."

To reiterate, I am not suggesting Helen was a lesbian. And as Johnston conveys elsewhere in her text, the atmosphere of the school still remained conservative and, important to reiterate, racially segregated. Johnston still points to the fact that Helen gained her formal art training in a space where women could relate to one another in new and profound ways. Circling back to Belasco's assertions, perhaps we call the situation of these new relations "Modern."



IMAGE 14

Pictured above is a textile design pattern created with woodblock printing on what seems to be burlap, depicting an Appalachian landscape. Helen created it at the Woman's College (W.C.) of University of North Carolina (now University of North Carolina Greensboro) between 1938 and 1940.

Dimensions approximately around 4' x 6'.



IMAGE 15

After graduating from the W.C. in Greensboro, Helen spent a year studying fashion at the now-defunct Traphagen School of Fashion in New York City. A recent 2019 exhibition at Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) created a survey of the Traphagen School and its influence on fashion in the early-to-mid-20th century. Please see: *Traphagen School: Fostering American Fashion*, 2019. This remains another flash point for ongoing research around Helen's work.

Helen also designed and made her own clothes, of which only one dress remains.



IMAGE 16

Pictured above is an image believed to be created in the 1940s, after Helen's marriage in 1942. Helen's fashion skills reportedly landed her occasional jobs in Asheville, NC illustrating advertisements for local department stores. However, no official documentation of this has yet been found.

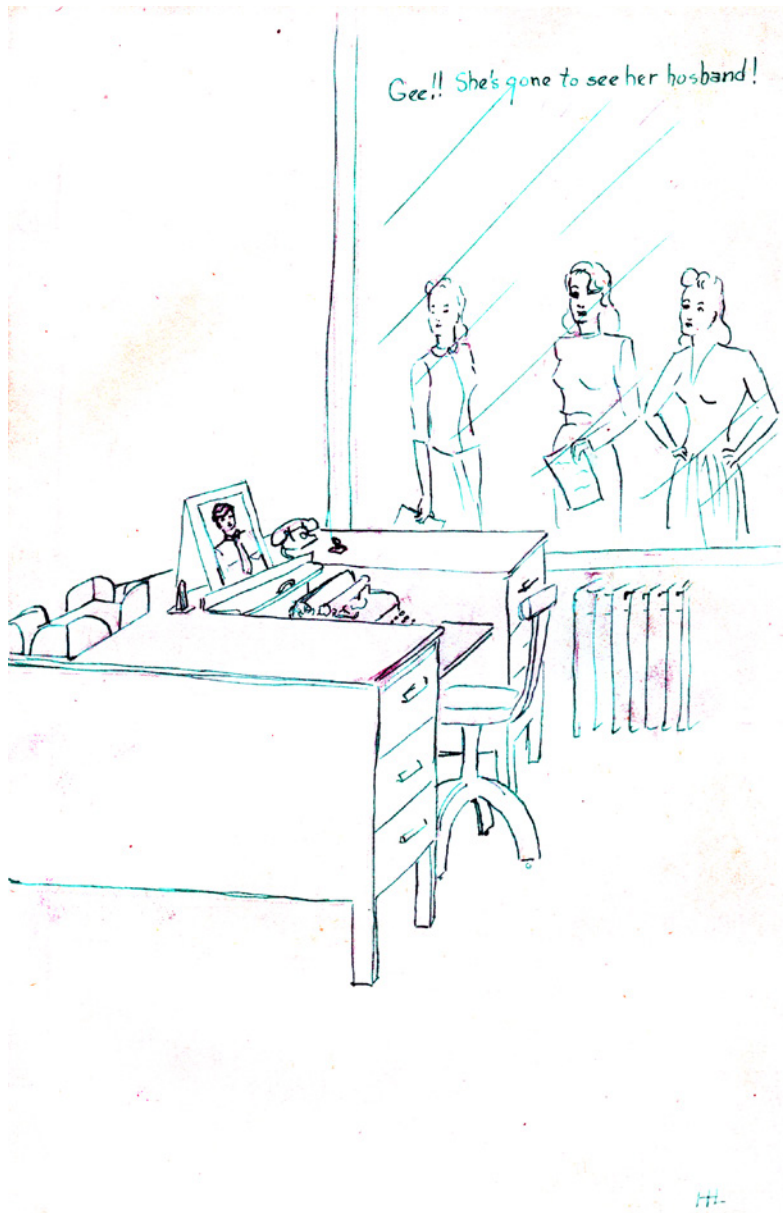


IMAGE 17

During World War II, Helen sent many drawings to her husband, Albert Lineberry Sr., who served in the United States Air Force. Helen remained in Asheville and went to work as an office clerk in the downtown Grove Arcade, which remains there to this day. An abundance of letters between Helen and Albert now sit in family albums. Those exchanges often included postcards of single panel cartoons illustrating Helen's misadventures during the war by way of a character she titled "The War Widow" or "Just a War Widow." The cartoons tended to feature scenes of interior domestic life, or of her work life at the downtown Grove Arcade. Pictured above, a group of women peer into the empty office of a fellow female co-worker, who they presume has gone to see her husband, implied to be in active military service. Such as with higher education, these new work spaces provided new homosocial spaces for women to interact with each other, documented in many of Helen's war-time cartoons.



A PORTRAIT OF THE LATE W. E. SWEATT, former superintendent, will be presented to Alexander Schools at Union Mills today at 2 p. m. Helen Lineberry of 652 Hendersonville Road was commissioned to do the painting by the school alumni association, of which Victor Workman is chairman. The artist is shown with the finished work. (Citizen-Times Photo)

IMAGE 18

Pictured above is a photo from Asheville Citizen Times, depicting Helen with a commissioned portrait she painted of the late W.E. Sweatt, former superintendent of the now-shuttered Alexander School in Union Mills, NC. Sweatt was killed in a school shooting in 1951. The portrait's whereabouts are currently unknown, as this is currently the only documentation available.

Photo: Asheville Citizen-Times



IMAGE 19

Pictured above is a portrait Helen painted in 1954 of her daughter, "Pal," shown here to be sucking her two middle fingers with a precious doll.

Another vector of critical debate is signaled: namely, Helen's simultaneous work as mother, wife, and artist, which necessarily includes overseeing household operations and the work of child-rearing. Second wave feminist artists, performers, filmmakers, and scholars of the 1960s and 70s would challenge or possibly model ways out of gendered domestic labor. As a potential precursor cultivated in the 1940s and 50s, Helen's studio practice sets part of the second wave feminist stage through a slightly anticipatory - though not necessarily "liberatory" - model: can art itself become a viable part of historically gendered labor?

Beyond second wave feminism, another set of questions emerges related to how the ability to make art within a white class-ascendent "domestic sphere" also lives in relation to often insibilized Black labor, particularly in the American South.



IMAGE 20

Pictured above is a portrait Helen painted in the early 1960s of my father, Scott: the youngest of 5 children.

In negotiating fickle frames of interpretation for Helen's work outside of "outsider art," "visionary art," or folk art, to which one may argue would not apply to Helen based on her formal education, a potential feminist recuperation of art created under pejoratives such as works of the "pedestrian", "domestic", or otherwise "private spheres" comes to mind.



IMAGE 21

Date unknown, pictured above is a work Helen created by enticing a cat to walk through paint across a table, reportedly using a piece of bacon.

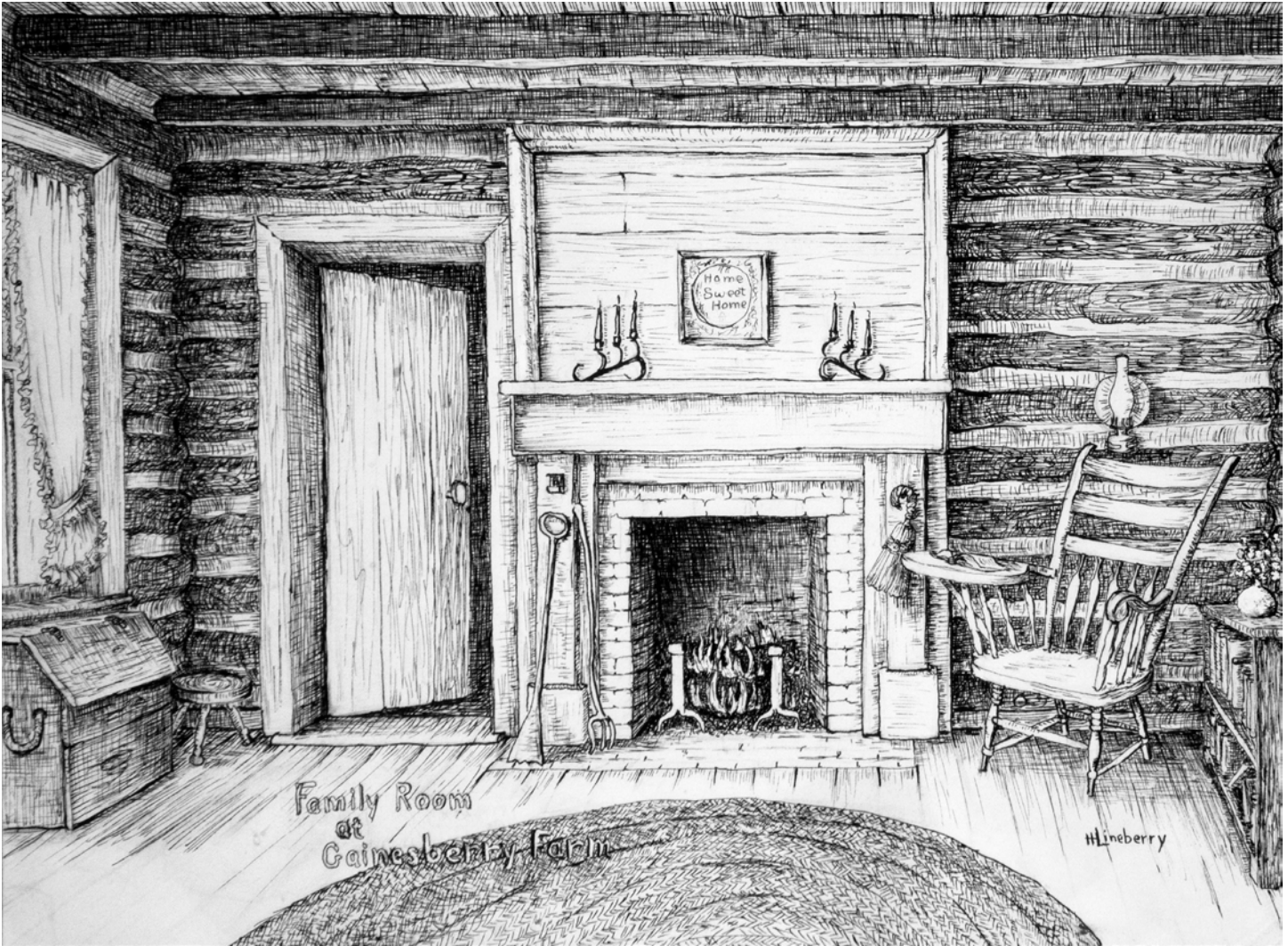


IMAGE 22

Pictured above is a pen-and-ink drawing Helen created of an interior scene of a family farm house near Burlington, NC. Drawings such as this were often reproduced and turn into Christmas cards.

Throughout the rest of her life, Helen continued to make myriad kinds of work of different subject matter, including but not limited to: portraits, landscapes, fashion, private and domestic interiors, architectural exteriors, abstract designs, still lives, and pottery. Unfortunately, I am unable to share all of these works with you in this document.

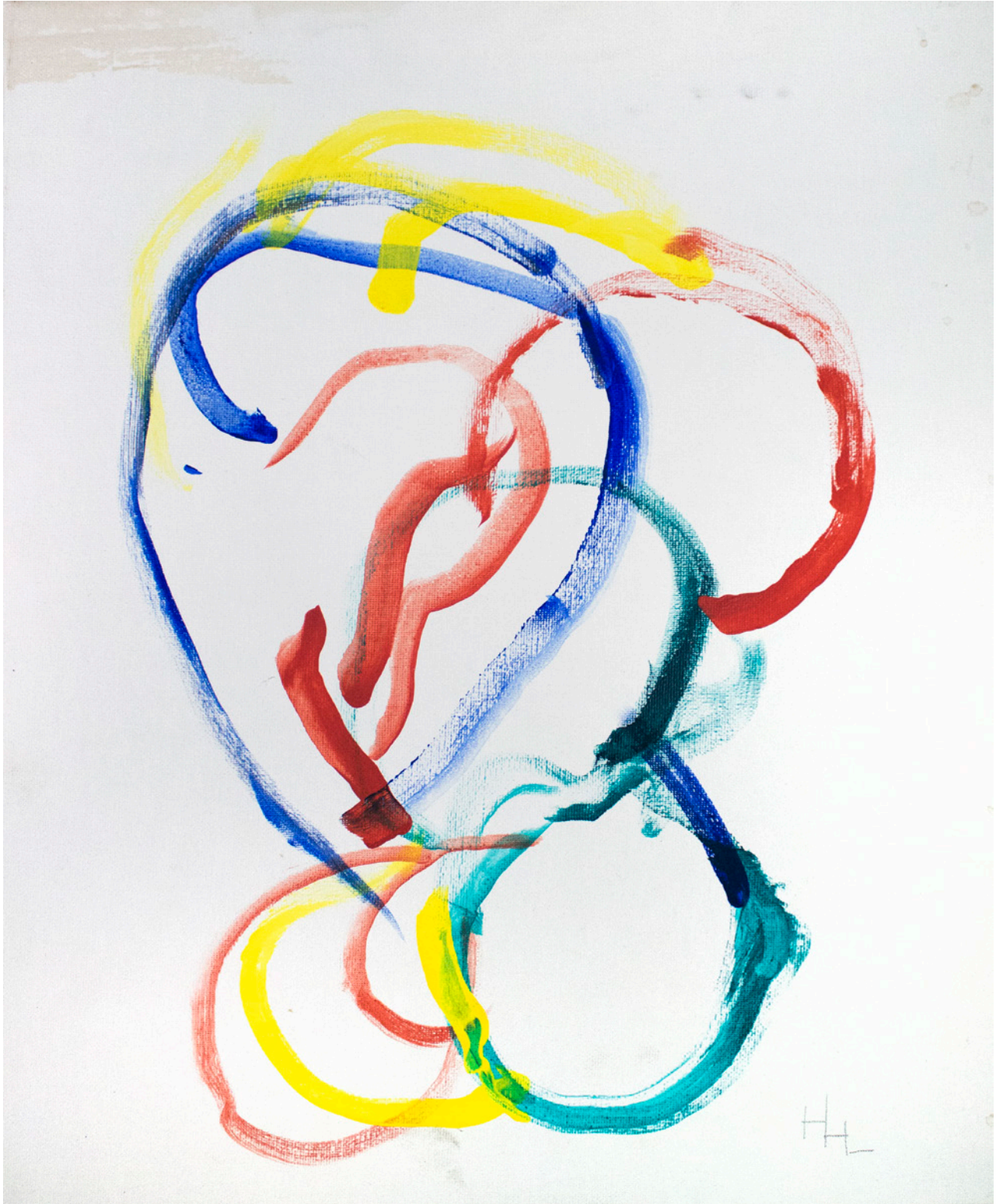


IMAGE 23

Pictured above is one of the last paintings Helen created in the 2000s, following a stroke in 2002.

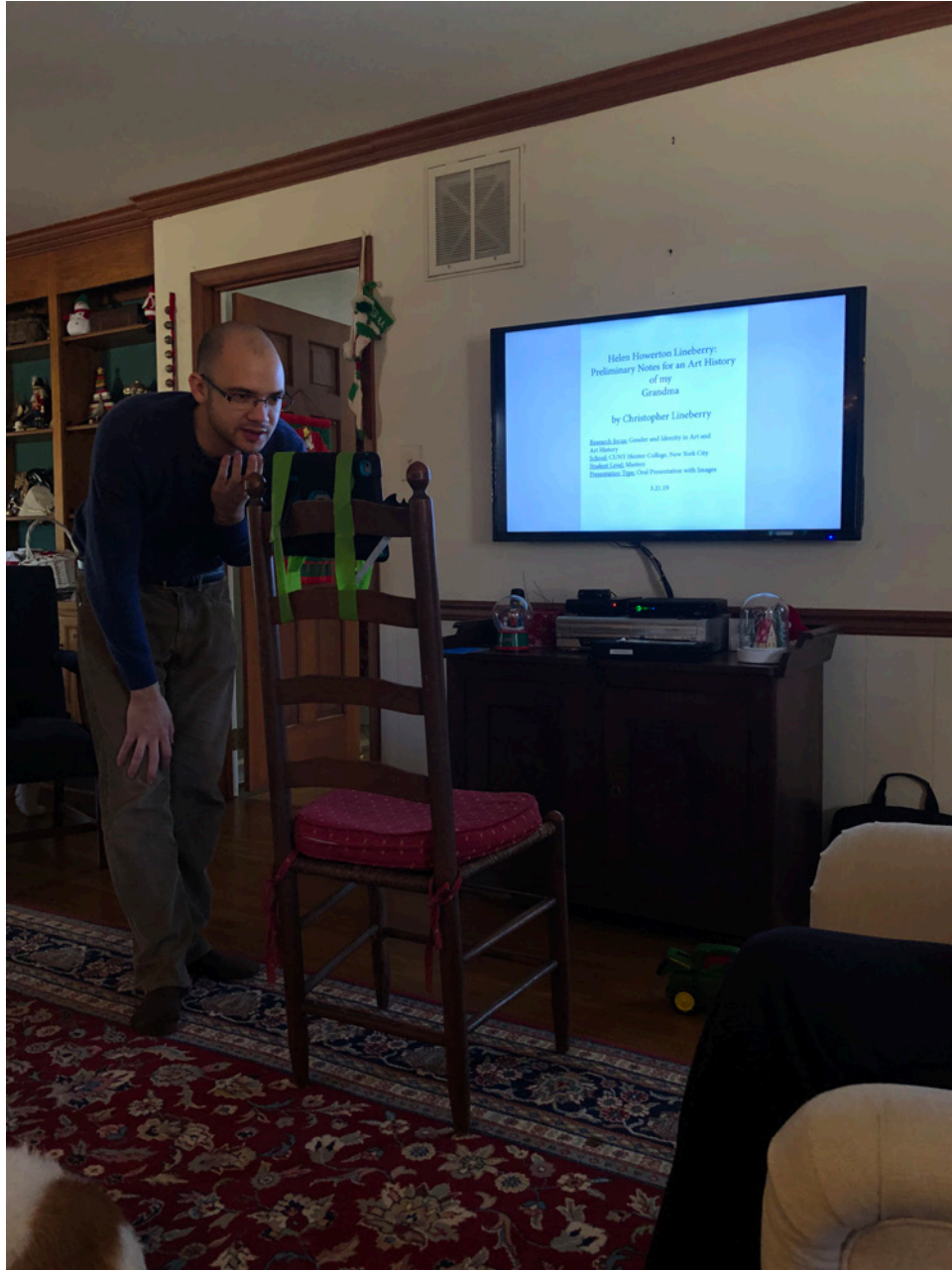


IMAGE 24

In December 2019, I delivered an intimate lecture to our family about Helen's work. Pictured here is my brother Bryan taping a smart tab to a chair so my Aunt Pal could tune in.

1915

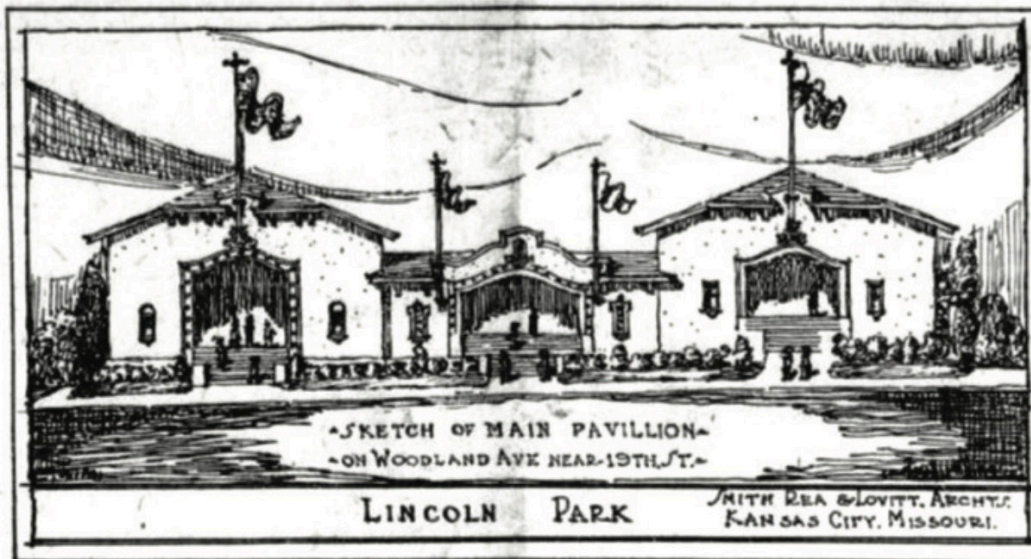
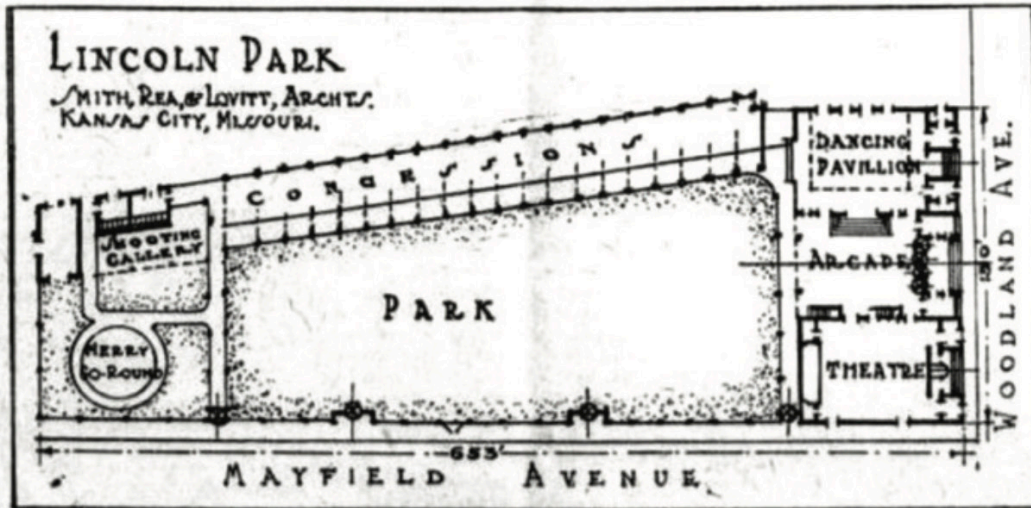


Figure 1.1 [Above, Top]: *Kansas City Sun*, February 13, 1915. Kansas City, Missouri.
Blueprint for Lincoln Electric Park.

Figure 1.2 [Above, Bottom]: *Kansas City Sun*, February 13, 1915. Kansas City, Missouri.
Sketch of Main Pavillion at Woodland Ave and 19th St.
Enlarged drawings originally by Smith, Rea, & Lovitt Architects.

2 LINCOLN ELECTRIC PARK: A SUBMISSION TO THE BLACK ARCHIVES OF MID-AMERICA, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

IMAGE 25

Pictured above is selection from *Lincoln Electric Park: A submission to the Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri*, described in the main body of text.

Full 84-page document available here: www.tinyurl.com/lincolnelectricpark1



IMAGE 26

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (1 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 19" X 13" - 2018

In addition to the description found in the main body text, this work also sought to address lingering tensions from NC House Bill 2 around presencing a gender non-conforming body in a North Carolina municipal building.

Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.



IMAGE 27

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (2 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 13" X 19"

Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.



IMAGE 28

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (3 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 19" X 13"

Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.

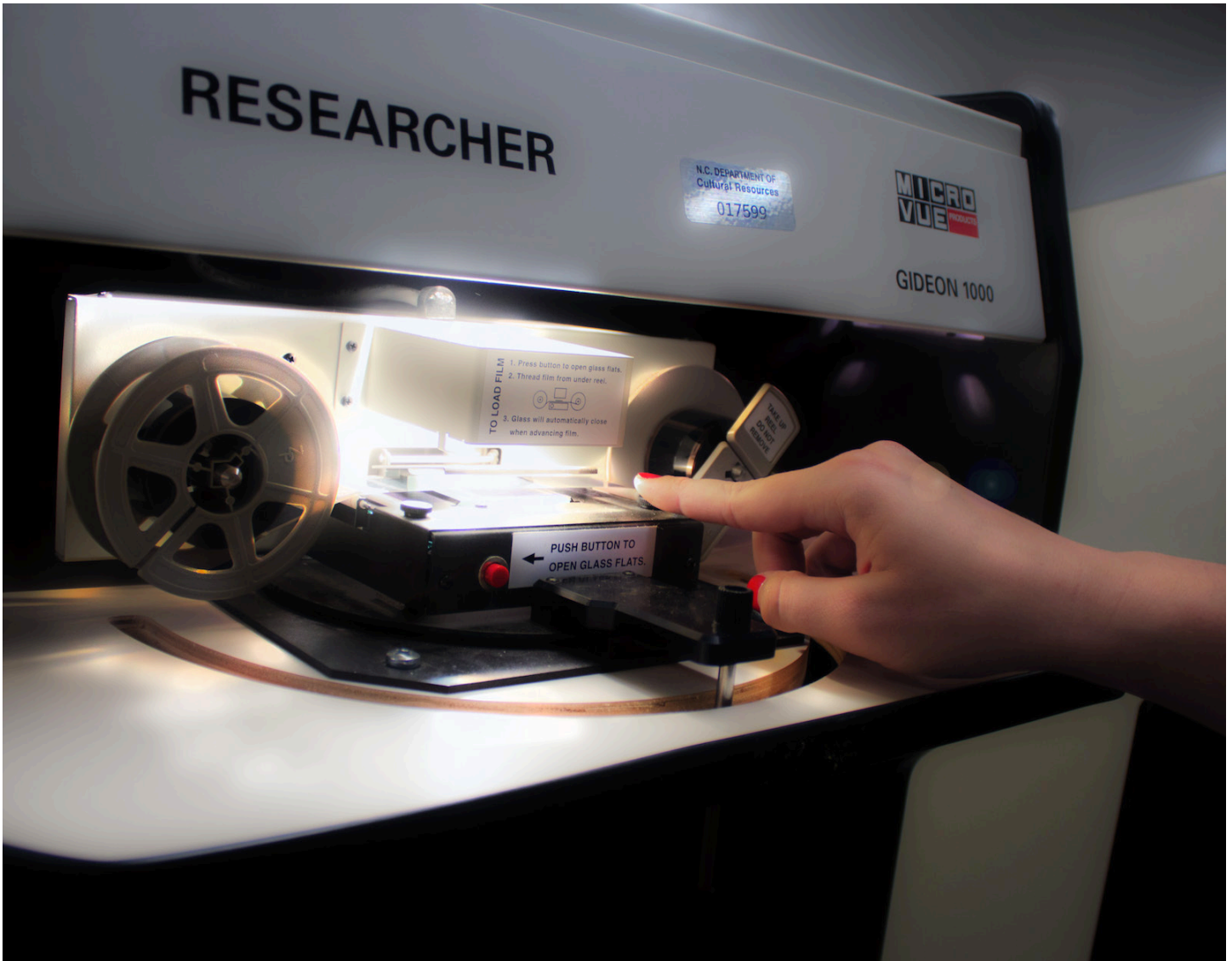


IMAGE 29

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (4 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 19" X 13"

Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.



IMAGE 30

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (5 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 13" X 19"

Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.

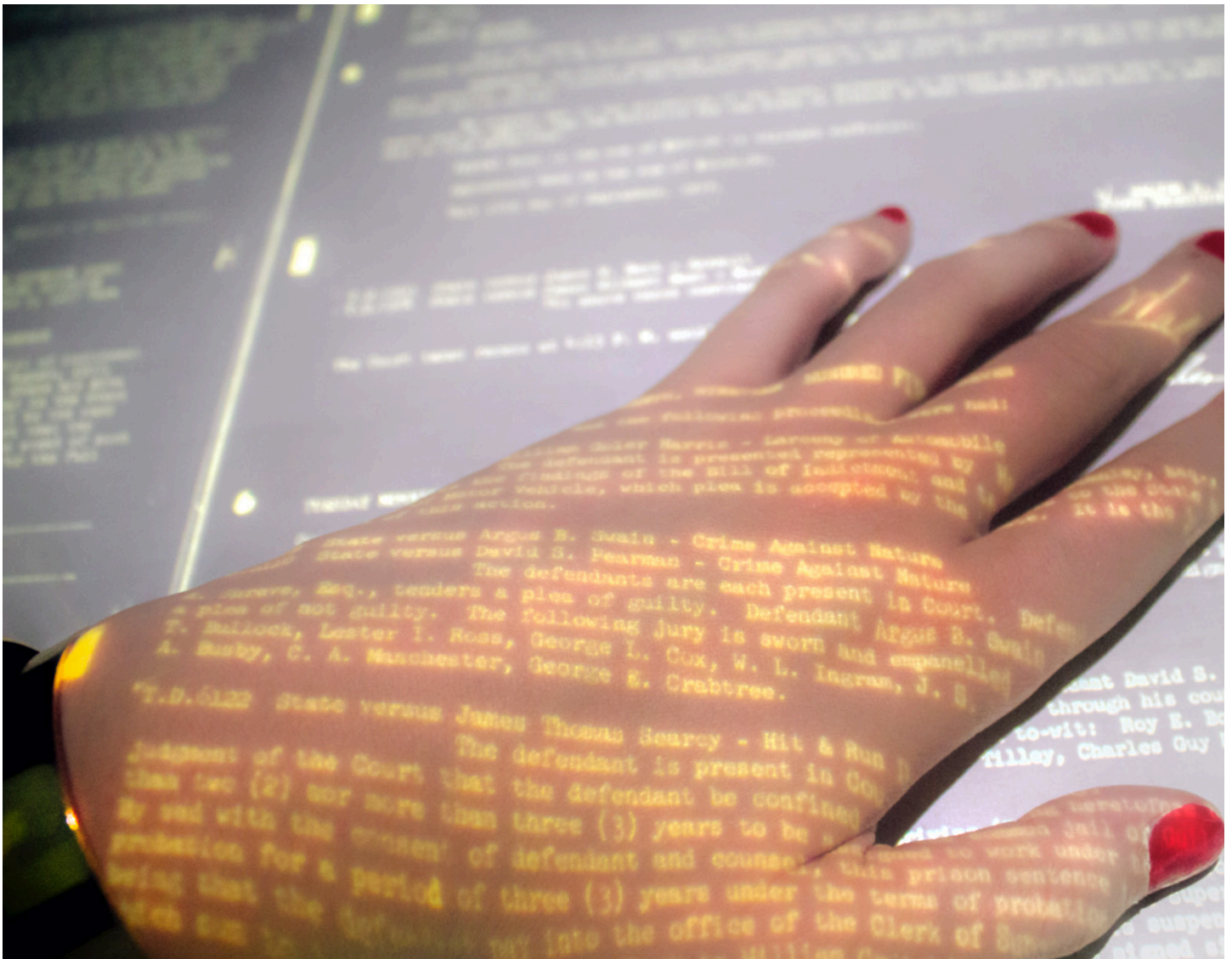


IMAGE 31

Lois Lane Investigates 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (6 of 6) - Archival Inkjet Print - 19" X 13"

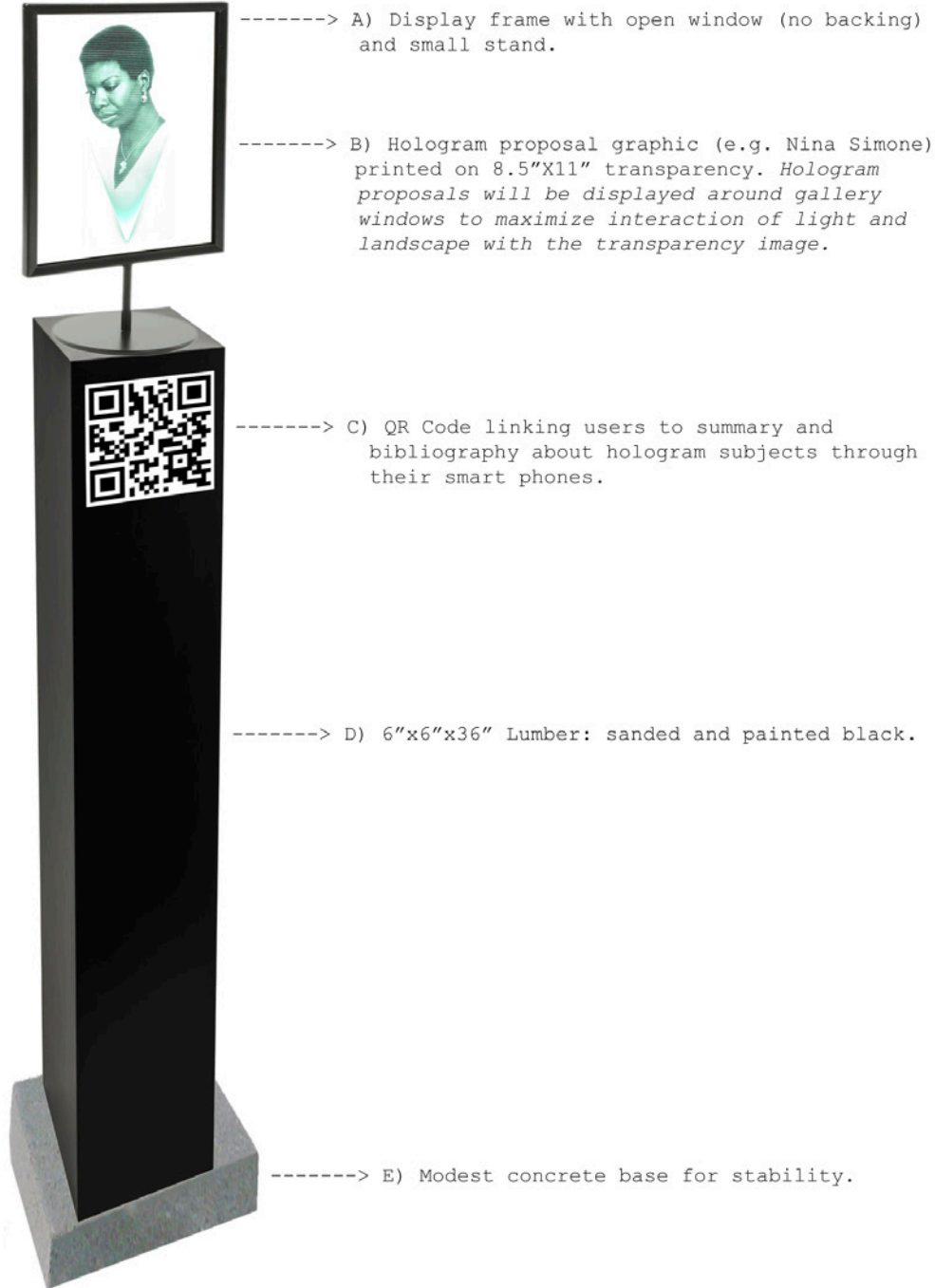
Photographs by Taylor Marissa Hoard and the artist.



Pictured: From rejected application proposal *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks: Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer*.

I. *Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer*, Proposed work for disembodied ASU Yosef the Mountaineer costume, placed in separate glass vitrines around the Turchin Center Gallery. Submitted to the Turchin Center for Visual Arts in 2018.

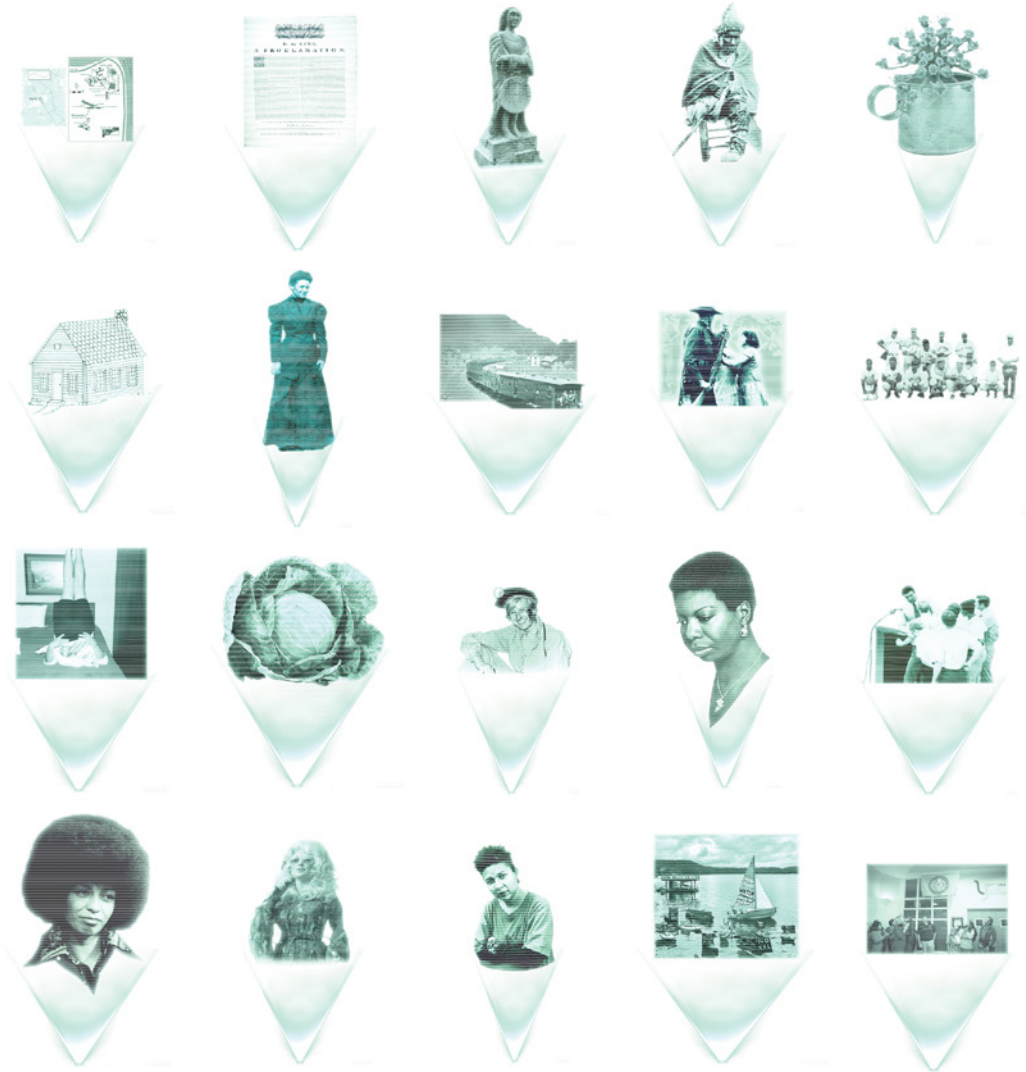
IMAGE 33



Pictured: From rejected application proposal *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks: Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer*.

II. Gallery Display for Hologram Proposals (feat. Nina Simone). Proposal rendering for sculptural display of subjects to be imagined for public space. Submitted to the Turchin Center for Visual Arts in 2018.

THUMBNAIL GALLERY: PROPOSED HOLOGRAM SUBJECTS



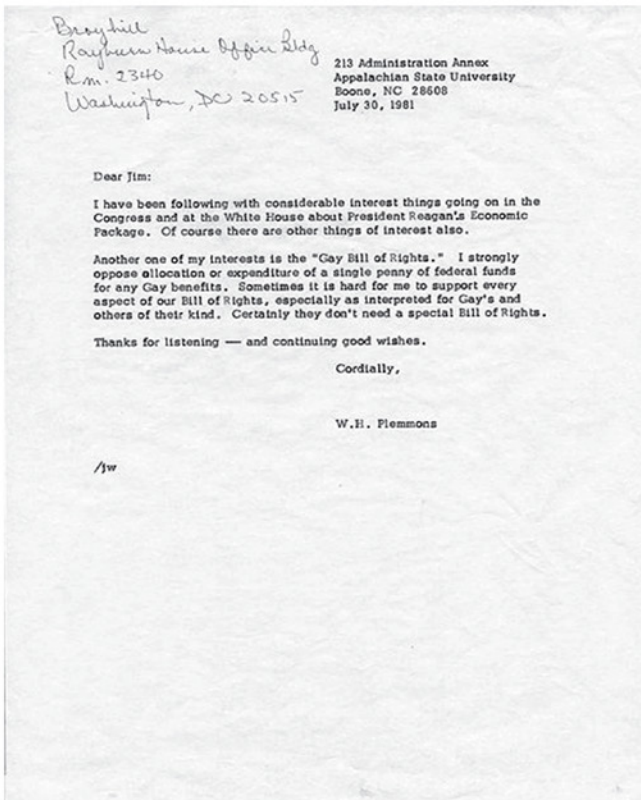
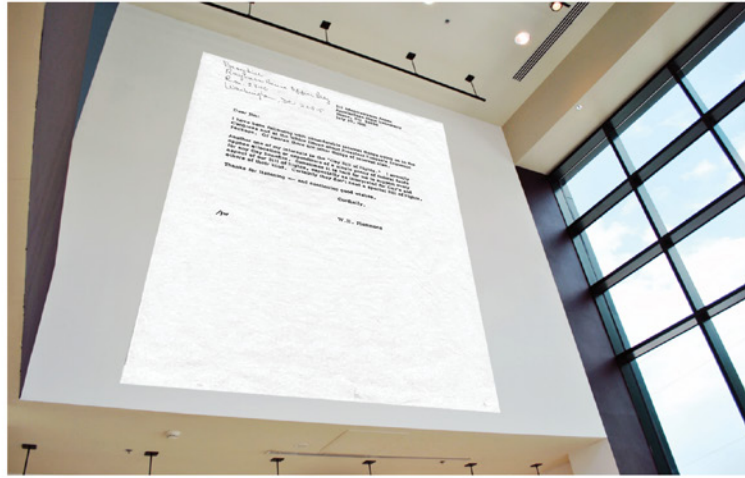
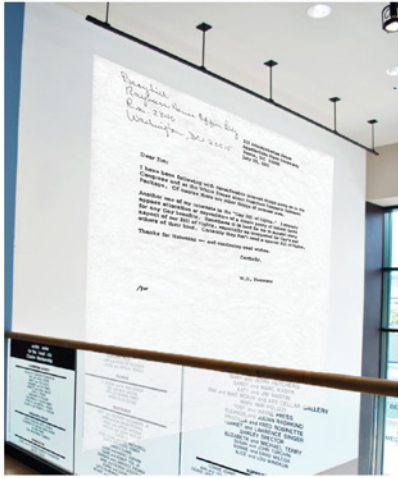
Pictured: From rejected application proposal *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks: Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer*.

III. Thumbnail Gallery for Proposed Hologram Subjects. Proposal rendering for subjects to be workshopped and imagined for public space. Submitted to the Turchin Center for Visual Arts in 2018.

These images represent a preliminary collection of subjects to be made into sculptural proposals for hologram “counter-monuments”: imagined for future realization on Appalachian State University’s campus. They are rendered as classic sci-fi hologram projections. These subjects were to be workshopped with student groups from Appalachian State’s Multicultural Student Development, for whom the budget proposes compensation for time and energy. All subjects relate to various re-framing or recognition of white cisheteropatriarchal capitalist and settler colonial histories regarding Appalachian State University, the town of Boone, Watuga County, Western North Carolina, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and broader Appalachia.

NOT A SINGLE PENNY + REAGANOMICS + GAY BILL OF RIGHTS/
TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF HOMOPHOBIA AND THE SETTLER STATE
(FEAT. W.H. PLEMMONS, FORMER APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT)

Installation proposal for wheat-pasted engineering print:



<--- Sent from ASU in 1981 to Jim Broyhill, the body of the text reads:

"Dear Jim:

I have been following with considerable interest things going on in the Congress and at the White House about President Reagan's Economic Package. Of course there are other things of interest also.

Another one of my interests is the "Gay Bill of Rights." I strongly oppose allocation or expenditure of a single penny of federal funds for any Gay benefits. Sometimes it is hard for me to support every aspect of our Bill of Rights, especially as interpreted for Gay's and others of their kind. Certainly they don't need a special Bill of Rights.

Thanks for listening - and continuing good wishes.

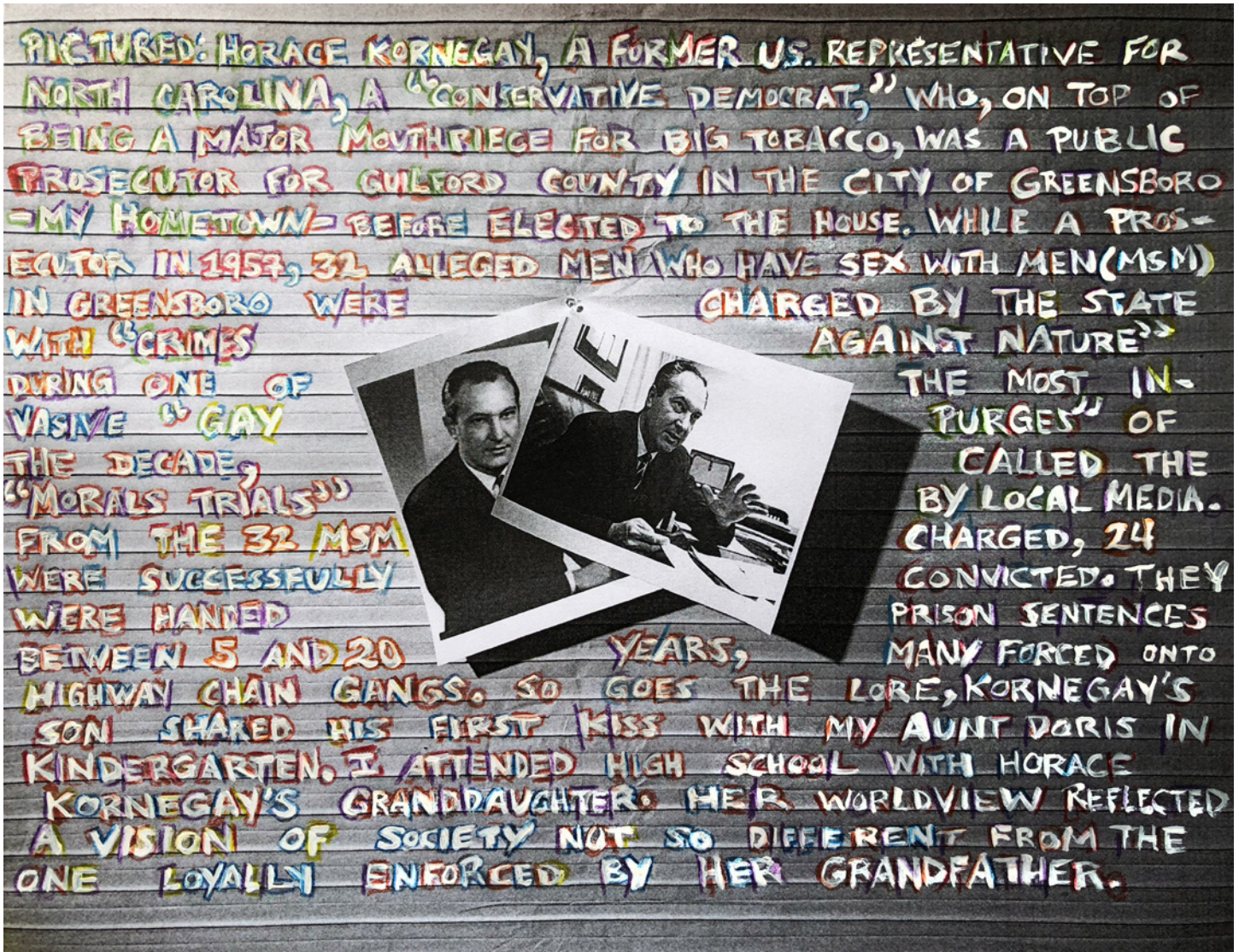
Cordially,
W.H. Plemmons"

Pictured: From rejected application proposal *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks: Toward Unsettling the Mountaineer*.

IV. Gallery Display for enlarged wheatpasted document written by former Appalachian State University president, W.H. Plemmons, after whom the Plemmons Student Commons is named, where the Multicultural Student Development is currently located. Submitted to the Turchin Center for Visual Arts in 2018.

APPENDIX 1

Additional Works on Kinstitution and Kinstitutional Critique



APPENDIX 1.1 - Horace Kornegay: Arbiter of Nature, Paint and Colored Pencil on Black and White Laserjet Print, 8.5" X 11", 2018.

Created for residency at Ace Hotel, New York, NY. This text-and-image work reads: "PICTURED: HORACE KORNEGAY, A FORMER US REPRESENTATIVE FOR NORTH CAROLINA, "CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRAT," WHO, ON TOP OF BEING A MAJOR MOUTHPIECE FOR BIG TOBACCO, WAS A PUBLIC PROSECUTOR FOR GUILFORD COUNTY IN THE CITY OF GREENSBORO - MY HOMETOWN - BEFORE ELECTED TO THE HOUSE. WHILE A PROSECUTOR IN 1957, 32 MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM) IN GREENSBORO WERE CHARGED BY THE STATE WITH "CRIMES AGAINST NATURE" DURING ONE OF THE MOST INVASIVE "GAY PURGES" OF THE DECADE, CALLED THE "MORALS TRIALS" BY LOCAL MEDIA. FROM THE 32 MSM CHARGED, 24 WERE SUCCESSFULLY CONVICTED. THEY WERE HANDED PRISON SENTENCES BETWEEN 5 AND 20 YEARS, MANY FORCED ONTO HIGHWAY CHAIN GANGS. SO GOES THE LORE, KORNEGAY'S SON SHARED HIS FIRST KISS WITH MY AUNT DORIS IN KINDERGARTEN. I ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL WITH HORACE KORNEGAY'S GRANDDAUGHTER, WHOSE WORLDVIEW REFLECTED A VISION OF SOCIETY NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE ENFORCED BY HER GRANDFATHER." This work would later inspire a performance intervention into the North Carolina State Archives to research the 1957 Greensboro Morals Trials [Image 26-31]

APPENDIX 1.2

Great Aunt Gertrude Golf Getaway

(pentaptych) -

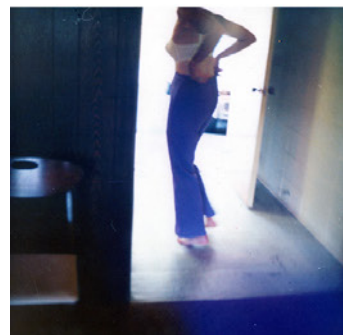
Archival Inkjet Prints

Reproduced from Found

Polaroids in the latter 20th Century

- 6"X6" (X5) - 2016

Great Aunt Gertrude Golf Getaway (pentaptych) - Archival Inkjet Prints
Reproduced from Found Polaroids in the latter 20th Century - 6"X6" (X5) - 2016. This particular set of images were taken by my Great Aunt Gertrude: a P.E. teacher who lived alone, never married, loved golf, kept a close cohort of female friends referred to as her "golf buddies," and according to family members carried a very "masculine energy." After her passing, some of her old polaroids were discovered by my cousin Taylor. They feature her and her golf buddies at a Holiday Inn for the Blue Ridge Women's Golf Association: drinking, in lingerie and underwear, half-dressed, etc. Ultimately speculative as is so much queer historical evidence, the photographs testify to the potentials and realities of organizations like sports to serve as one of many outlets for queers in Appalachia - specifically lesbians - to covertly meet and interact. To this day my conservative evangelical mother vehemently denies the possibility of Gertrude's queerness. Special Thanks to my cousin, Taylor Vandiver, for retrieving, scanning, and sharing these photographs.





APPENDIX 1.3 *Notes on the Hanes-Lineberry Funeral Home* - Digital Photographs taken after field research - 2017-2018. As may be apparent in the presence of the same last name "Lineberry," Hanes-Lineberry Funeral Home was once a patrilineal family-owned business in Greensboro, NC. My research revolved around a series of social and political questions through oral histories around this family institution, resulting in photographs highlighting the interior aesthetic, architecture, and structure.



APPENDIX 1.3 (CONTINUED)

APPENDIX 2

Additional Works Related to Archive

APPENDIX 2.1

Saving an Archive, Video of Performative Archive Intervention, 1:00, 2015.

As I researched Arthur Tress's 1977 photograph, *Supermany Fantasy*, NY, I found the work's misattribution to photographer Philip Trager in the digital scholarly database, ARTSTOR. Dressed as Superman, I called Tress using the phone number listed on his website. I left a voicemail alerting Tress to the error. The phone call was made in hopes of "saving" an archive relevant to queer bodies, while generating a cross-generational response to the male myth of Superman. I never received a response. However, some time between 2016 and 2018, the ARTSTOR database was corrected.

Right Column Images:

Top - Video Still from *Saving an Archive*

Middle - *Superboy Fantasy (A Response to Arthur Tress's "Superman Fantasy, NY, 1977)*, Digital Photographic Print of Macbook Photobooth Photo, 19" x 13", 2014

Bottom - Arthur Tress, *Superman Fantasy*, NY, 1977





APPENDIX 2.2 A: *Fire Island Party I* (from *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks*) - Enlarged 30" x 20" print made from scan of mixed media on laserprint photograph, 2019

After my first rejection from the Turchin Center for Visual Arts at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, I became curious in works by queer artists in their permanent collection. Communication with their collections manager and director revealed they did not specifically clock this. What I found through ARTSTOR, however, were a series of Andy Warhol photographs donated to the Turchin and other underserved art institutions in 2007 by the Warhol Foundation. Kneejerk eyerolls aside at the invocation of Andy Warhol's work, this became a significant anchor in developing new work, bootlegging Warhol's photographs from the Turchin's collection on ARTSTOR - many of them explicitly queer - haptically responding to, decorating, and layering onto them. Once finished with these works I hope to donate prints to the Turchin and propose a two-person show with Andy Warhol.



APPENDIX 2.2 B: *Fire Island Party II* (from *Blue Ridge, Lavender Marks*), Enlarged 30" x 20" print made from scan of mixed media on laserprint photograph, 2019.

APPENDIX 3
Additional Works Related to Proposal



APPENDIX 3.1: *Conversion Therapy for Toppled cofederate Soldiers Monument Base, Durham, NC (A Proposal to Redirect Power) - 2017*



*APPENDIX 3.2: Conversion Therapy for the Appalachian State Football Field:
Topian Vision for a Sustainable Water Park - 2018*

APPENDIX 3.3:

My Brush, Your Hand, Our Plants
(A Proposal for Coalition),
scored performance/maintenance
work - 2018

Using fluoride-free toothpaste,
this scored performance invites
a group of participants to brush
each other's teeth and use the
backwash to water plants,ulti-
mately forming a collective foun-
tain. This piece is part of sev-
eral works that propose personal
hygiene as a basis for forming
new temporary coalitions.

Performers: Jenna Beasley, Paul
Ramirez Jonas, Paul Vogeler, Leo
Madriz, SiSi Chen, Jess Ellis,
Hannah Schutzengel, Kennedy Bai-
ley, Kajin Kim, Lily Wong, Clive
Zheng, and Topher Lineberry

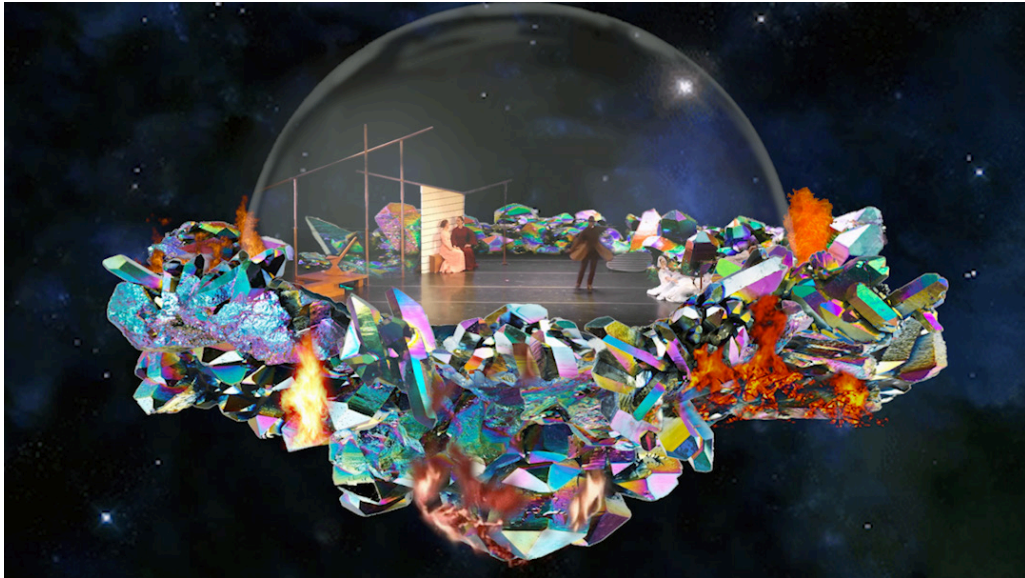
Photos by Simon Benjamin and
Spence Moore





APPENDIX 3.4: *Pez Pavilions* - Mixed Media Sculptures - 2019

Though lacking the more elaborate display mechanisms of my thesis work, these sculptures carry many formal similarities. These were an important "bridge work" toward bringing proposals into a physical form.



APPENDIX 3.5: *Bizarro-Girl Recites Selections from Being Radical or Something She Read or Heard Once (A Response to Mike Kelley)/Towards a Benevolent Absence* - Video Still from in-progress video and part of original proposal for MFA Thesis at Hunter College - 2020

These stills use the basic architecture of Supergirl's home, Argo City - a piece of Krypton which escaped destruction - inhabited by a keyed-out performance of Martha Graham's ballet *Appalachian Spring*, scored by Aaron Copland, set designed by Isamu Noguchi.

The video was to accompany a performance by me dressed as Bizarro Supergirl.

This as-of-yet unrealized video sought to use Mike Kelley's work, *Superman Recites Selections from 'the Bell Jar' and Other Works by Sylvia Plath* (1999) as a prompt.



APPENDIX 4.1: *Kinstitution: A Topia Between Archive and Proposal*
(installation view), mixed media sculptural installation,
dimensions variable, 2021 - Photograph by Néstor Pérez-Molière

Statement:

Topher Lineberry (b.1990, Greensboro, NC) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work often uses historical and archival material in conjunction with speculative proposals. In short, Lineberry's work fuses prequel and sequel into a queer space of becoming. Most recently, this mode of working has taken a sculptural turn, creating a miniature world of architectural models and maquettes reminiscent of world's fairs and theme parks. These models flirt with, refuse, and talk back to art historical categories forcefully grafted onto the American South such as "outsider art," "folk art," and handicrafts. Drawings-turned-game pieces inhabit this sculptural topia. These flat free-standing images were traced and altered from drawings by the artist's grandmother, Helen Lineberry, who drew them in 1929 as a 10 year-old in the Appalachian Mountains. The collecting of her drawings emerges from a larger project of researching, documenting, and writing about Helen's lifetime of work into an art history in its own right. Using family and kin as a platform of investigation, Topher Lineberry advances a project they term "kinstitutional critique" into a site of critical "kinstitution building." They currently live and work in Brooklyn, NY.



APPENDIX 4.2 (Above): *Kinstitution: Mountain*, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

APPENDIX 4.3 (Below): *Kinstitution: City*, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

Photographs by Néstor Pérez-Molière



APPENDIX 4.4:

Kinstitution: Pavilion, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

Photograph by Néstor Pérez-Molière



APPENDIX 4.5:

Kinstitution: Swimming Pool and Diving Board, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

Photograph by Néstor Pérez-Molière

APPENDIX 4.6:

4.6 A (Right, Above): *Kin-stitution: Tower and Tunnel*, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

4.6 B (Right, Below): *Kin-stitution: Tower and Tunnel* (detail), mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021

Photographs by Néstor
Pérez-Molière





APPENDIX 4.7:

4.7 A: *Kinstitution: Theater*, mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021 - photograph by Tim Laun

4.7 B: *Kinstitution: Theater* (detail), mixed media sculptural installation, dimensions variable, 2021 - photograph by the artist