



The  
Demon  
of  
Regret

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**In the year 349, on the fifteenth day of the first month, on the planet on which I died and was born, I found myself in the Hall of the Burgomastahs in the First City of the Nation.**

**It was, as every fifteenth day is, the day of trade: when all the traders from all of the nation come to the Hall to do business.**

**I was present for I had recently been apprenticed to one such trader. Kindlier than most, if only because of their advanced age. On the road to the hall I was told: "You do not understand for you are a child: the only life of value is the life of the old. Know that suppleness of body and smoothness of skin are not markers of value." My work load reflected their feebleness and the day was, as I would have learnt, as tiring and as busy as every fifteenth day would have been.**

**The hall - which the day before was a church, and the day before that a music hall, and the day before that a sporting hall, and the day before that, an exam hall, and the day before that a lecture house (and so on) - was high-ceilinged and cool.**

**However hard the work was, I had a job at least, so I decided I had relatively little to complain about and, besides, I was not alone in my duties. I got to meet others like myself, from far away places, with accents that tickled and curled in charming ways.**

The fifteenth day of each month is a day that fully exhibits our acquiescence to the laws of the selfish old: We apprentices did the lifting and dragging and the pushing and the sweating as, above our heads, the traders did their esoteric business. In every direction there were scores of wizened old Traders, standing upon their parked caravans, surrounded by retainers, glaring at other traders, bartering and insulting in whistle-speak and hand signal. And so, in this way, the hall was very much like the whole of the world and I realized that, despite my troubles, at that moment it didn't matter where I was as anywhere I could be, powerless and young as I was, would be the same as this.

Finally, after a day of much struggle, haggle and argument, everything began to wind down. All additions had been ticked and all subtractions had been crossed. All receipts had been hand-printed and all deeds of ownership had been properly transcribed. All records of construction, maintenance and guidelines for upkeep were in order. The traders of all lands were ready to vacate the hall and allow it to be tended to by its guards so that it might be made ready overnight for its next role tomorrow. However, with everything ostensibly accounted for, there remained a single table in the very middle of the hall. It was a self-evident, trivial thing. bereft of ornament, it occurred as if sturdy but nevertheless retained a displeasing air of flimsiness.

In our society, where condition and context change so quickly, where one thing or person or place must be many things for many different occasions, we naturally value the correct art of record-keeping. As like us, all things that are traded, of course, come with their little treeplastic envelopes of carefully kept deeds of ownership and allegiance. A thing with improper documentation is a vexatious thing. A thing with no documentation at all is impossible.

After much loud debate over the table, patience was lost. Fingers were pointed, voices were raised. a trader from the north accused a trader from the south of conforming to stereotypes of sloppiness. a trader from the sea spat at a huddle of traders from the mountains. a trader from the mountains shoved one of the traders from the rivers. The traders' retainer unveiled a club. swings were dealt. fists made arcs in the air as traders began to spend chairs, breaking them across the backs of other traders.

in the time it takes to boil a kettle, real blood was shed. The table's absence from record read as no good thing: a dark omen. What 'thing' could a thing be with no origin? If we'd had the words for it, it-without-a-maker, we would have accused it of blasphemy.

For it's part: The table ceased it's glowering sullenry. With a shudder and then a bang, it then began to shake. The table stood up onto its hind legs and shook itself wild. The labour of its construction, the sweat and tears of emburdened workers, sprang from it in great spouts - great silvery, and sticky, shivering streams, looping high into the air, in great unbroken and opaque arcs. As the table

became more and more free of its labour, it became desiccated and suddenly - upon freedom from the misery that held it together - it burst into a hundred thousand dry splinters. Several of the closest traders were now covered in the thick, silver'd effluvia, and as they wiped it from their faces their old wrinkled skin sloughed off and underneath they had the smooth faces of youth.

At this, shouts and screaming began.

A troop of Hall Guards, summoned by the commotion, dropped their shields and weapons in shock. The closest screamed: "plague! Plague!" and turned to run, dyed white hair spilled from underneath a slipping ceremonial helmet. The rest followed, jingle-jangling towards the door like a bag of coins in their ill-fitting mail armour. All doors to the hall were barred.

On the first night I crept to the door. A subtle knock: "why can't we leave?" A mumbled gruff reply, singly-syllabled. I ask again and am replied by footsteps receding.

By the morning, without their medicines, most traders had begun to pass away. My own was amongst the first. We, the young, were now mainly unemployed. I and the others began plan and scheme for escape. We stood on each other's shoulders to peer out of the high up windows to better understand our entrapment.

For our efforts: The unemployed apprentice at the peak caught an arrow in the neck and with shrieks, the pyramid collapsed in on itself.

What little we were told before the arrowed unemployed's expiration could be summarised thusly: fire and madness.

In our entrapment, we had scarcely considered the constipating effect the lack of changeover of the hall might've meant. All tradespeople, clergy, singers, actors, judges, executioners, and the like must be laying siege to the Hall.

I myself could not imagine. The "how's" were beyond me. Without the rule of the change of the hall, I could not imagine the world.

It was night now and we had no food so we began to bang on the doors and beg to leave.

After a day and night of banging, the guards came in with spears so long they did not have to touch us with their hands. After we had all been speared and were lying down, we were hastily bundled onto a hundred hand carts and trucked beyond the city limits. I was still alive when I was put onto the cart but I died during the ride and was dead by the time we arrived. Prisoners threw us from the carts into the pit.



When I was thrown into the pit, I landed between two unemployed I knew and one I did not. I did not see who was beneath me but three I thought I knew were thrown on top. And so on until we were all in. The prisoners, themselves having touched us, were speared also and fell in on top of us.

We were covered in rocks and then soil and then the hall itself was burnt to the ground.

A note on my costume: I wear a red and yellow quartered tabard with black and white trim, as is customary for apprentices. (The quartering that is, the colours are the colours of my trader). The retainers wear colours halved and only the traders wear tasteful and refined black smocks with their colours carried on flags borne by favoured apprentices.



I saw the devil in a vision today. He was horrific to behold. in a landscape of ruptured earth and blackened trees he stood with his brothers and sisters, beckoning. I ran screaming to the light switch but the light made no difference because the devil and his brothers and sisters were stood still, solid as rock before me.

I howled at this new depth of grief, for an hour or a month or a minute, I screamed and swore and shrieked and retched and made sounds very much like the devil

and his brothers and sisters. And I looked again, and they were crying also.

I noticed that i had changed and become offensive to my earlier eyes, the devil and his brothers and sisters did not look like me but I now looked like they. And I went to them. And we wept together, as one. and the devil and I cried great green tears as he, with a heart as broken as mine, told me:

“it is hell now but one day soon we can rebuild”

And at once I recognised him as my family and the burnt and ruined land as the bedroom where I and my sweetheart had lived. Before the accident and before her death. My bedroom where, with sunlight dancing upon our cheeks, we cuddled and snoozed, nude as newborns, in the greatest peace I have ever known.



Take Klee's Assyrian game.

Paint a wall in your dining room black or a very dark chocolatey brown.

Hang Klee's Assyrian game.

Pick up your phone and listen as your friend tells you that every piece of cinema is a documentary. Don't listen to him.

Nod to the camera crew, let them know that you're ready and allow the director's yelp 'action' guide your behaviors for the next few minutes until asked to stop and start again.

Clear a space in your living room and prepare the entranceways of your house for the installation of a Carl Andre piece (which one? It doesn't matter (one of the flatter ones though)), do not worry about the rigors of installation, this will be carried out by trained and professional technicians.

Sweat under the lights.

Reply to that email from your roommate about the heating. Agree that it is bad and that the landlord is bad but don't do anything about it and instead spend more time in the studio. Remember to justify your inaction with this new, more compelling inaction. Wink to the camera maybe but, for god's sake, don't over do it. Everyone here is on the clock.

Find yourself a nice new apartment without your landlord and without your roommate, whilst this is happening: take it more seriously with your girlfriend. With your combined income you can now afford a nicer apartment than any you've had since and you can finally have the idea to open a project space in your spare room.

Maybe make some work together with your girlfriend. Share a website documenting the products of your union.

Suck the air in through your teeth in an agitated fashion. hide from the assistant director and, when no one else is around (steady track in, medium close up to extreme close up), stare at your dark chocolatey brown wall – don't even look at the painting – and, whilst in the act of staring, try to summon some thought witty or profound instead of the sweet fuck all that you're currently conjuring which feels surprisingly bad for nothingness.

The ratings pick up. Somewhere, someone decides not to pull the plug but the romantic subplot should become more central.

you receive a push notification: Simon Fujiwara is into what you're doing, would like to meet for coffee and chat, has some good ideas that would work well in your space, ciao x. blow air from your lips, fast and with enough force so that your lips come completely apart in the flap and so that your sigh of anger and fatigue is indecipherable. Simon Fujiwara is now installing with his assistants and they are not very professional.

Feel the years whip at you and on you and by you as you realize that you are a bitter workaholic and a director of a serious gallery. And you make money. The website you made with your ex is still online, it has not been updated in many years, maybe don't delete it yet though. Thank something you care about that you did not buy a dog.



**Miss. and yearn. later, yawn.**

**Drift from art. take some time to write a poem.**

**This is the poem, read it aloud to whomever you are with:**

infinite inertia:

Take your shoes off and throw them in the lake.  
take your shoes off and throw them in the lake  
oh god, please. oh my god, Oh god oh please:

Won't you please

take your shoes off and throw them in the lake.



**Years ago, on the island Auschwitz, the lady Nanny was leader of a village of rebels. As close to the original people as was left but, in truth, Nanny's lot had been imported. They held on in the mountains and fought the Overlords in on the plains at night.**

**Nanny's warriors were full of old ways, were angry, but Nanny was calm: never rose her voice above a whisper, all who meant to hear must lean in. In this way, Nanny was respected.**

But Nanny was feared also. So fearful of Nanny were the Overlords that, upon her capture, they tortured her for many days.

Finally, on the way to the gallows she saw the eyes of her long dead love staring out from the face of a dog and, at this, knew she had been cursed to receive no peace.

Nanny was hung from the neck until dead and taken from gallows to central fortress, so that she might be guarded before daybreak burial in a hidden place.

A spiteful vigil occurred: a room full of Overlords watched her, arms in hands, a facing-inwards perimeter. Each alert, and angry, for Nanny had caused them much fear but as the night darkened and moon rose, each began to fall asleep in turn. When the last's eyes closed, Nanny's eyes opened. She leapt up and, with new breath in old lungs, slew the room, quick and fast.

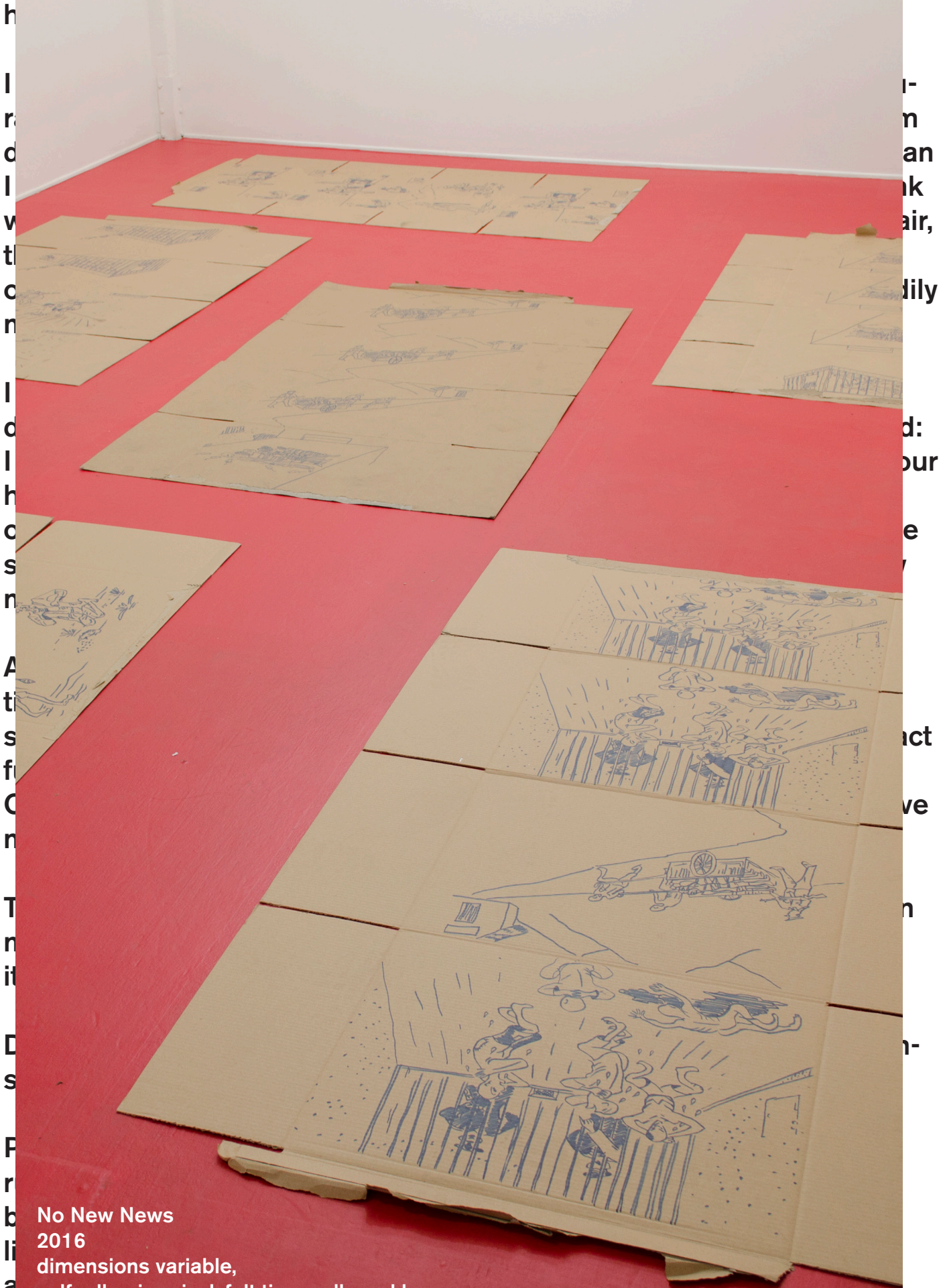
With moon in sky, Nanny jumped out of the highest window in the fortress and ran away. Her legs stretched and stretched each stride. Her one step worth twenty. she, faster than any man: the ground itself compels her to move.

Nanny circles the mountain, always in the foothills, never on the plains, never on the peak. Nanny kills dogs when she sees them. The Overlords are no longer Overlords, they say, but what has changed? Nanny stalks the mountains still.





Dear reader



No New News

2016

dimensions variable,

self adhesive vinyl, felt tip, cardboard boxes,

besides. we were the very spirit of violence. we ate and murdered and



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My Clone Sons

2016

72" x 105 1/2" x 3 3/4"

aluminum, plywood, epoxy putty,  
plexiglass half-spheres, synthetic hair,

Xavier.

as



He was from a poor family, but had won a scholarship to a prestigious university. He was a brilliant student, and his grades were outstanding. He was a member of the honor society, and he was elected president of the student body. He was a leader, and he was a role model for his peers. He was a person of great talent and great potential. He was a person who was destined for greatness. He was a person who was going to make a difference in the world. He was a person who was going to change the world. He was a person who was going to leave a legacy. He was a person who was going to be remembered. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved.

I don't know how to describe it. It's a feeling that I've never experienced before. It's a feeling that I've never felt before. It's a feeling that I've never known before. It's a feeling that I've never understood before. It's a feeling that I've never felt before. It's a feeling that I've never known before. It's a feeling that I've never understood before. It's a feeling that I've never felt before. It's a feeling that I've never known before. It's a feeling that I've never understood before.

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"A person who is not a part of the solution is a part of the problem." - Albert Einstein. I've always been a fan of his. He was a person of great talent and great potential. He was a person who was destined for greatness. He was a person who was going to make a difference in the world. He was a person who was going to change the world. He was a person who was going to leave a legacy. He was a person who was going to be remembered. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved.

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In the end, he was a person of great talent and great potential. He was a person who was destined for greatness. He was a person who was going to make a difference in the world. He was a person who was going to change the world. He was a person who was going to leave a legacy. He was a person who was going to be remembered. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved. He was a person who was going to be missed. He was a person who was going to be loved.

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to wade through a crowd of listeners to reach his cell, and he spoke to



Elf Orc Box  
2016  
48" x 72" x 2"  
black aluminium enclosed bulletin board,  
blue felt, commissioned illustration (2016) by  
Stephanie Escalona Morales, red tape, inkjet  
prints on acetate transparencies,



his executors throughout his final hearing. On their way out from the



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**My Clone Sons**

2016

67" x 68" x 3<sup>3/4</sup>"

aluminum, plywood, epoxy putty,  
plexiglass half-spheres, synthetic hair,

stones I hear of such things dwindle and lessen as each year passes. It



is difficult to live as we did in the shadow of love

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**Black Bastard Bacchus**  
2016  
1 hour 33 minutes  
looped .mp4, stories from the practice,

mirror held up against our plans and schemes in whose reflection they melt.

I was part of that team, the team that freeze-dried all living things. It took a long time but every living thing, we did freeze. We froze it all in order to weigh it.

Then: we went back in million year steps, and freeze-dried everything we found. And guess what! A trend appeared! The total weight of biomass, in each age of the earth, was exactly the same!

But, fantastic as this was, we continued, freezing and stepping, back towards the dawn of life on earth... And Lo! We beheld the beginning: the earliest days, when the sun shone pink through an immature atmosphere. And the whole earth was covered a shivering thin pink blanket of skin-like-things that jerked, in pulse, to the rhythm of an inaudible and invisible heart. And because we couldn't not: we went backwards one more day, to the day that pink blanket came, to watch it rain down onto a naked planet.



A girlfriend of mine once made an artwork where she embedded one of her teeth in a block of liquid metal. As an unintended consequence: the properties of the metal were such that it protected the tooth from decay. Much later than this, the museum which eventually owned the tooth, placed it into a very sophisticated vitrine.

Whilst I lived and died the world changed. As the civilisations of the earth fell away or apart, and the people left, changed or were exterminated, the museum remained untouched.



Much later after my death, the earth changed too. Masses of land slid apart. As my fossilised remains were finally folded back into the under mantle of the earth to be obliterated by great heat and pressure, the vitrine, on the opposite side of the planet, was lifted higher and higher upon a mountain that would eventually dwarf our Everest. On this great peak, far from Tectonic activity, the remains of the museum sat and froze.

Even later still: the sun ballooned, and the earth was burned and then nothing happened for a very long time.

one day, people returned to the miserable red earth, that no longer span on it's axis, but sulked impotently with one face permanently pointed at it's bloated and sullen pink sun.

These new people, who visited this earth, were not like the people that constituted my world all the time ago.

The new people who had come all the way to here had pneumatic muscles, and silicon organs and thoughts that visibly swam inside bulbous and glassy heads. They were not angry things like us and if ever they were like us they were now no longer: under no urge to conquer, their mission was purely archaeological.

They searched the earth, saddened and rouged, birthplace of wondrous and confused radio signals, bouncing throughout the forevers. And, eventually, these new people found the silver ruins of the museum, cold and dusty, and came across my old girlfriend's tooth - suspended in liquid metal - and made another of her (and then another, and so on and so forth), one billion years after today.





I have received, in a vision, the secret story of the war in heaven. In breathy and quieted whispers, the historiographic hieroglyphs were unfolded. It turns out that all the 'baddies' were misled and all the 'goodies' went too far and were, in their own way, corrupted also (the same way that cucumbers are corrupted into pickles). And all of this is as fascinating as it is overwhelming, in a whistlingly-sad-wind-tunnel sort of way, but time dictates that i must 'zoom in', as it were, and concentrate on just one flick of a curve of a glyph:

Sammich was a beloved angel of heaven. Sammich's popularity, earned through warmth and humility, won them a commission in the angel lucifer's freedom army. Sammich was, by all accounts, an unassuming and quiet angel, happily predisposed to flower arrangement, botanical illustration and to their duties in the grand choral phalanx. Sammich's own justification for involvement in the brand new idea of warfare and armies lay in a giddy interest in pageantry and complex, cooperative group activity.

One must remember, that war did not exist until the angel Lucifer cast off their given name and became Satan in order to invent it and, because of this newness and unfamiliarity, the first part of the war would (to our own violent and sinful eyes) be comically amateurish. Concepts such as 'enemy' and 'foe' were, at that point, purely academic. Before any casualties were inflicted: land battles would metamorphose into vast and gleeful dances, naval skirmishes would refashion themselves into colourful and intense floating collaborative choirs, aerial



engagements would transmute into friendly competitions of endurance and agility. After several hundred subjective years of this sort of thing the ruling powers began to grow bored and, in their boredom, they took the war more seriously in the hopes of ending it so that all the angels could do something else for a change. In the pursuit of tactical effectiveness, the ruling powers organised themselves along rigid hierarchical lines, more efficient for the dissemination and enforcement of orders and, in doing so, invented what we would now understand as the 'state'.

After the first day of true and real fighting sammich was captured by forces loyal to the state and, in hopes of setting an example, was severely and profoundly punished. Poor Sammich's punishment (which, as it transpired, served only to prolong the war and utterly convince sammich's comrades of the righteousness of their cause) was to be rendered unto demonhood. The particularities of Sammich's demonhood were particularly brutal and extreme. The laws of sammich's demonhood are rendered thusly: Sammich is 'summoned' every time a human man or woman eats a sandwich. Sammich has no body but sandwiches. As a human man or woman raises a sandwich to his or her lips the flesh of sammich is transubstantiated into the material of the sandwich itself. At which point, Sammich is masticated. Sammich is torn and shredded between teeth. The summoning is inadvertent, which is to say, each human man and woman has no knowledge of his or her torturer's role in the punishment inflicted. furthermore, the particularities of Sammich's demonhood are to be enacted for as long as there are sandwiches and as long as there are teeth in mouthes that chew.



Hello everyone,  
thank you all for coming.  
Thank you to Young Jimmy for appearing as the guard in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Jon Mildenberg for appearing as an audience member in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Andrew Wagner for appearing as an audience member in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Daniel Beckwith for appearing as an audience member in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Constanza Alarcon for appearing as an audience member in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Alteronce Gumbly for appearing as MC Ride in the Black Bastard Bacchus, thank you to Jon Mildenberg again for helping me to document the show, thank you to Cristobal Cea Sánchez for helping me with 3d models, thank you to Lynette Sauer for helping to sort out the printing of transparencies, thank you to Eunwoo Nam for helping me get the notice board up the stairs, thank you also to Cheon Pyo Lee for helping me and Eunwoo Nam carry the, notice board and also for lending me equipment and materials when I ran out, thank you to Kari Conte and to Susan Hapgood for their insightful conversations at the start of this process. Thank you to Lizzy De Vita for helping me to gather supplies for the works downstairs. Thank you also to Ashton Hudgins for also helping me gather supplies for the work. Thank you to Houda Lazrek for publicising the exhibition, thank you to Laura Sanchis for letting people into the show to see the work, thanks to Alexandra Sloan, Stephanie Cone, Mollie Flanagan, & the interns here at ISCP. Thank you to Del Hardin Hoyle for helping me to lay the floor. Thank you to Mathias Hancock for helping me hang works as well as for lending his likeness to 'My Clone Sons'. Thank you to Rebecca Vanegas for lending her likeness to the work Elf Orc

Box, thank you to Stephanie Escalona Morales for her illustrations, thank you to Rowan Renee, K Anthony Jones, Jay Hodges, Michael Sanchez, Michael Stynes, Tiona McLodden, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Kate Ghotbi and Molly Dektar for their patient input into the conceptual development of this work in seminars at the JFI. Thank you again to Tiona McLodden again for helping me to find actors, thank you to Drew Lichtenstein for helping me hang the works, thank you to Benjamin Slinger, Kitty Clark, Hans Jacob Schmidt, Raf Rennie, & Harlan Whittingham for proof reading my writing. Thank you also to Jenny Hung for proofreading my writing, for lending me equipment and for her generous and loving support throughout this entire process. Thank you to Julian for agreeing to speak with me today.

And finally, I'd like to thank Juliana Cope, for her introduction and for helping to guide me through the process of putting up this exhibition at the ISCP and to Dreamie Wardlow, for helping me in my studio. My apologies to anybody I have missed. I thank all of these people for their efforts and for their friendship. Without their help, this show would have never happened. There are four works in the exhibition. They are My Clone sons, from 2016, and that's made from aluminium, plywood, epoxy putty, plexiglass half-spheres, and synthetic hair. There is the work the Black Bastard Bacchus, also from 2016 (all the works are from 2016) which has a looped mp4, and written stories from the practice. There's the work No New News which is Felt Tip ink on cardboard boxes upon self adhesive vinyl. Finally the work ElfOrc Box which is black aluminium enclosed bulletin board, blue felt, red tape, inkjet prints on acetate transparencies, and a commissioned illustrations by Stephanie Morales. I wont go too much into what the work means as hopefully that's



what the conversation with Julian today will help to uncover. I'll only say that the work was made while thinking a lot about conditions of white supremacy as well as other things. And finally, whilst an event like this implies a natural sort of hierarchy, in that everybody here is here today to listen to Julian and me talk to each other, I ask instead that we collectively re-interpret this event as an inversion of what it is in fact. I ask that we imagine this evening's event as a trial, with myself as the defendant, Julian as the prosecutor, my works as my deeds/ crimes and yourselves, dear audience, as something like a jury.

*Thank you Joseph, and on the note of institutions of white supremacy, I'll just thank all of you for coming to see us rather than watching the Republican Convention, I hope this will be a better show than that. On the note of thanking I want to ask you a little bit about the science fiction genealogy of your show, I know we've discussed HG Wells's the Time Machine, the novels of Stephen Baxter, Warhammer... just if you could give everyone a sense of what you were reading and watching and thinking about?*

In the process of producing all of the work I was reading a lot of Mark Von Schlegell, who publishes with Semiotext(e), as well as re-reading works that have always been important to me from people like Philip K Dick, Cordwainer Smith, Olaf Stapledon, so on so forth. With the exception of Philip K Dick, these are all relatively obscure writers. Those are the sorts of things I was reading about and thinking about as the show came together. The science fiction aspect at the very least, in the context of the clones, is definitely there.

*And the show was originally conceived as a written project?*

Yes. In the work the Black Bastard Bacchus, which is the video work downstairs, the security guard is reciting stories that have, in the main, been written over the last year or so and that have coalesced during my time here at the ISCP. There is one story in that video that was going to have ended up as a novel if certain things hadn't transpired in my life... If I hadn't gotten this residency, if I hadn't continued making work, so on and so forth. There's something about that and something about writing one's first novel that exists as something of a cliché for young creative people in the world, and in New York. And there's a great deal of anxiety I have towards it as a process. I'm from a family of writers. Once upon a time my entire practice was writing and it's still something I'm struggling to interface with in a useful and wholly productive manner. It's very easy to, for me at least, to be frustrated by how I might be tied down by what I say, which is one of the lazier excuses not to write, but yeah... my fraught relationship with writing has definitely helped produce something of an engine that a lot of these works in this show have come out of. Specifically those conditions of regret, which is something I am interested in. I've been thinking about what it means to title this body of work under the rubric of 'the Demon of Regret' and there's lots of space in there.

*You certainly do something in the show that is difficult to do with writing, which is really to surround people in a space... so I was wondering if I could ask you about how really uncomfortable this show is to be in, assuming a kind of prosecutorial stance. I don't know how many of you have been downstairs to see it, but the boots of these Clone Sons are in your face, you look up at them and you're looking into their nostrils, you're surrounded by the Black Bastard Bacchus*

*playing, with it's lively performance, and you're also walking on a floor with these really harrowing illustrations from North Korean concentration camps... so I'm wondering exactly what that discomfort is supposed to bring about?*

It's worth knowing at this point that a significant strand within my practice is curating. I'm very interested in the way that work sit within spaces. I've helped run project spaces, I've curated group shows all over the place, it's a process that's always in the back of my mind when I'm making work. You know, curation is a bit like photography in the way that it has a specific baggage with regards to ethnography. I like to think about how curating has developed: in the stealing of objects of value and of importance from West Africa and around the world for display in big institutions in Europe like 'ta-daah look what we won!' in places that then become museums, that then evolve practices of curation, and so on and so forth. But even aside from that genealogical aspect I am fascinated by the degree to which curation itself, on just a practical level, mirrors certain colonial practices. Not only in the potentially antagonistic relationship between the curator and the artist but also in the fact that once all the works are up in a space, what's been done is that somebody has created an environment that somebody is being pushed through. I'm always struck by how differences in ways of placing two paintings on a wall, in relation to a sculpture, might create entire paths through spaces that never would have been if none of the work had been there or if the works were hung in a different way. And so, thinking about the curation and the placement of artworks itself as a way of commanding space and a way of pushing people around is something I've always been interested in and is probably why so many of my shows, so much of

the work I make, especially when I'm given the opportunity, such as I was at the ISCP, to take over whole spaces, ends up with me creating such aggressive environments.

*I know when we've spoken before, you've compared spaces to organs. I know you said that when devising your last show you wanted to put it in a basement so that it might act like the bowels or bladder of the building it was in. You've described your studio as a place where you masticate... what sort of organ is this show to be? Is there a kind of biological reference that you thought of whilst creating it all?*

If I were pushed into the metaphor, I would say the space downstairs is somehow aortic... its like a chamber in a heart. Halfway through producing everything, I began to think about the works in the context of the lifecycle of images. The way that images get produced, and when credit is attached and then when credit itself ends up falling away as images are shared and repeated all over the place. For this reason going into the show I was specifically interested in commissioning images for a work and then having those commissioned images existing alongside images that are essentially stolen. Within those two instances there's a lot of space there... the Clones themselves represent things that have barely been made, they allude to works that I plan to make that fit into conceptual universes yet to be fully realised, and the video refers to an actual space and yet is entirely digital. So yes, there's something about images pumping around and images of spaces and images of places.

*Speaking of the way you've put together stolen, borrowed, & commissioned images, one thing that's striking to me*

*about the show is the way that you have in one piece, in the floor piece No New News, drawings of a real world from concentration camp survivors in North Korea, and you have surrounding these images, fantasy images of horror and inhumanity... we have the Clone sons who menace the viewer, and the ElfOrc Box where we see the transformation of a girl into an orc. What do you think is productive about putting these images of real world horror in conversation with more fantasy images of violent transformation and cruelty?*

I think there's a degree to which there are similar engines at work. The work No New News takes its cues from a UN report a few years ago. For that report survivors of North Korean camps were paired off with illustrators who then worked with them to create images that were naive enough to seem like they were drawn by a real person and yet informative enough to be able to illustrate the reports findings. These images exist on the furthest edges of our experience. The audience which sees this show, apart from maybe one person, doesn't exist within as extreme a sphere of control yet there's something about the way those guards treat people in the context of the history of concentration camps and how concentration camps work that exists within our own society to a degree within law enforcement practices for example and that is almost fantastical to begin with. There's something about the processes of dehumanisation required in order to be able to do some of those things to people, in order to see them not as people so that one might begin to tear them to shreds, that itself is sort of fantastic and, again, I am producing this work for an audience that in the main doesn't even look like me and in that respect there are things that it is difficult to talk about directly that don't sort of just

get shut off. I'm interested in confusing the space between a fantastic and a very gruesome, very real for, and in hope that, I might be able to have some of these things that they refer to be inserted almost hypodermically.

*So you think we need to have recourse to images to science fiction and fantasy and the forms of monstrosity and cruelty we see there to even understand or to commit acts like that but also to understand and resist them in our own world?*

ummmmm I agree to a degree. But I think that some of these processes of dehumanisation at their extreme are roughly similar. Another way of talking about that is to talk about ElfOrc Box, apologies if I'm jumping into any questions you have. ElfOrc Box features an individual who I have worked with in the past in other videos, being transformed essentially into an orc. I don't know if anybody is familiar with how the Lord of the Rings works, and how the different races within the lord of the rings exist, but the orcs themselves were stolen by the dark lord Morgoth, whilst elves, and tortured into orcs. I've always been fascinated in that because of the obvious parallels it has to the West African slave trade. What with populations from Western Africa being taken from one part of the world, to another, tortured away from what they were into something else, introduced into a whole new environment. And that being something that just 'happened'. And that's one thing but then also, at the same time, with something like the Lord of the Rings... with something like the tropes of science fiction... these are immediately recognisable and everybody, to a lesser or greater degree has a relationship to them. A relationship stemming ultimately from moments in time where particular

writers were writing and were themselves entrenched in fantasies of their own, which is to say: colonial fantasies. JRR Tolkien was born in South Africa, right? *Right.*

He was producing his work in between World War One and World War Two at a point in time where it was still totally acceptable to think of different nations and peoples as races but, not just that, he came from South Africa, which is to say there were 'orcs', there were 'elves' from Europe who'd descended to 'tame the continent' and so on and so forth. It's a reality of life in the West that white supremacy exists in all spaces and in all spheres.

*Absolutely.*

I mean we spoke about the Republican National Convention at the beginning of this talk and it's worth bringing it up again in light of Congressman Steve King literally purporting the white supremacist world view that Europe and America had contributed more to the world than any other group of people, and he tripped over and said 'sub-group' specifically. So you know, I think it's useful to think through where these things exist, for me at least.

*I was wondering if I could ask you about where and when you began thinking about histories of racism and colonialism in science fiction and fantasy, whether in your reading or film watching, of course it's everywhere and you can encounter it everywhere but what was your process of beginning to grapple with it?*

The first part of my artistic training was in the United Kingdom. I went to school at Goldsmiths and Leeds college of art and I went to school in those places between 2009 and 2013. They were

hostile environments and whilst I was there there were no conversations about race. I was maybe one of two or three black men in Goldsmiths out of an art department student body of about two to three hundred. The phrase 'identity politics is dead' was bandied about from crits to interpersonal meetings. It was basically an institutionally validated position and, I confess, I had never really had the space to even think about what the questions of blackness and everything else that it's connected to were. I never really had the space to think deeply about that and it was in coming to America that I began to find that space. It was in coming to America, and existing in a school with a more sizeable black student body, and having access to the sorts of intense conversations that I've only experienced in academic contexts in amazing classes by people like Hazel Carby and Kobena Mercer. This was the beginning of me being able to get the distance to be able to think about what it was that I had experienced in the United Kingdom. It was in coming here, and experiencing racism in America, that I began to work out and think about what racism was in the context of back home. It was, in large parts, working out the difference between Americanness and Britishness and Europeanness (though I don't know how longer I am a European for) so that's where the racism side of things come from but the science fiction thing... that's the literature that I grew up with. That in many respects was my first education. I learnt about plurality of gender from Ursula Le Guin before I ever came across anybody like Judith Butler. I was thinking about reality and how reality can collapse and smash into other things and I was experiencing that in the context of Philip K Dick before I came across any philosopher... I was reading I Am Legend by Matheson before I was reading about loneliness and total



bleakness of existence before I ever read Sartre. In many respects, I was doomed to make this work by virtue of what the local library had most of.

*It's fascinating but not surprising to hear that you came to so many of those questions through fantasy and science fiction because we have a prejudice, I think, that those genres are 'escapes', that they actually keep us from grappling with problems in the real world, with inhumanity in the real world but I think in your experience, and in my experience, it's been quite the opposite. I was wondering if I could ask you about a moment in one of your stories that relates to this... this is in the Black Bastard Bacchus, you can hear it if you put on the headphones downstairs, but there's a moment when Hannah Arendt is a sorceress in this story and she takes this race of demon beings and transmutes them into human shape and they're kind of in disguise and I saw this of thinking about Hannah Arendt's famous idea of evils ordinariness and banalness and something that we see everywhere but in that story, and in your work, I see a sort of insistence that we do see fantasy and the monstrous and the grotesque as a way of understanding evil. Is that right?*

Yeah, for sure. Julian visited my studio a few weeks ago and was struck by two books that I had on my shelf next to each other and one was the collected works of HP Lovecraft and leant against it was The Black Atlantic by Paul Gilroy. I am continually struck by and endlessly thinking about this idea of mundane eldritch horror. This idea of people doing dreadful things that are essentially banal and essentially mundane in their replication and proliferation and yet are still totally alien. Forgive me dear audience, but it's sort of the opposite of what Doctor Manhattan says in Watchmen

where he says: "oh, the thing about miracles is that we forget that they're miracles because they happen every day"... it's the literal inversion of that, in a way. But at the same time, that story I wrote and the invocation of Arendt is also a little tongue in cheek.

*I believe you also have in that story, a very social-justice university student who becomes a sort of Jesus figure and confronts the demon beings but I'll let you all enjoy that downstairs. It's interesting you brought up Lovecraft and you brought up grappling with the realities of racism and being a lover of science fiction... because, of course, Lovecraft was extremely racist and there's been a lot of black writers grappling with that... Victor LaValle just published a novella that's very Lovecraftian, and he's sort of publicly spoken about that issue. How have you engaged with those works with that in mind?*

There's two sorts of things there that are worth touching on. The first is that I love the way that science fiction is itself a ghettoised literature. I love the fact you can mention it and people will shudder, even now. There's interesting parallels that I find there, the fact that every other hollywood block-buster is science fiction, even if it doesn't purport to be... there'll be science fictional devices, and tropes within it, in much the same way that black culture is produced in one place and commodified by capitalism and so on and so forth.

*And it's very similar because if science fiction is good enough, it's no longer science fiction... if black culture is good enough, it's no longer black culture, it's 'mainstream'...*

Of course, of course, the phrase speculative fiction comes to mind...

*Right...*

And then also at the same time, I think about how as much as these writers such as Tolkien, such as Lovecraft, such as Philip K Dick (such as fucking most of them to be honest) are saying relatively terrible things there's still value in that. And it's not a value that I'm finding despite the obvious disgustingness of some of the things they're saying but kind of because of it... it's all so intertwined that I don't want to imagine it without it, if I were to pull those bones out the things would have no skeleton.

*It's what makes them interesting.*

For sure, and I think that that perhaps betrays an attitude that I have towards changing the names of things... I think there's a real strength, or importance perhaps, strength might be the wrong word, in us acknowledging and accepting and thinking about all the terrible things that were thought (and done) rather than just ignoring them. That ignoring exists as a fantasy space of it's own. I was thinking about Game of Thrones in it's earlier seasons, before they 'introduced' homophobia, but the presentation of a medieval society that is totally fine with homosexuality as opposed to how homophobia existed in the middle ages and so on and so forth

*You mean the way that Game of Thrones did track reality in that sense?*

No, I mean in the way that it didn't. It presented a idealised space. You see it again in period fiction. I don't really want to go on too much about period pieces or anything but the dissonance between the values we have today, and the values then, and us inserting our own values onto the past... and that being something I'm against. But that's maybe too far in

one direction and I don't really want to run down that alleyway in this conversation.

*And you accept that inheritance? I know you've discussed complicity a lot in the context of your work. Could you talk about the complicity in this show? Obviously the most obvious example being these very harrowing drawings on the floor and the discomfort you experience in walking through and being so close there.*

To a degree, it loops back to some of the things I was saying about the history of curation and some of the aspects of it whereby I am talking about invoking this type of pushing and pulling and commanding-of-space type gesture and I'm doing it all whilst thinking about how I might be wrong. And that's not to say that I think the practice of curation is wrong or anything, an insane thing to even propose, but rather I'm interested about how I might be wrong in my own context. One of the things the Clones are doing, I hope, by being placed up in the space is forcing people to look up at them. That whole gesture of sticking things up high has a relationship to advertising and also to stained glass church windows. Which is to say, they're ways of inspiring awe and communicating power. There's something I heard once, and I'm not sure about how scientifically accurate it is, but there's something that happens wherein one looks up at something for long enough, blood starts to collect in the back of one's head and that blood being there makes happy drugs and endorphins get produced in the brain, and the opposite happening when one looks down. I think about those sorts of physiological laws and I think about them in the context of art existing in space and time and history. Grand architecture and so on and so forth. And I'm fascinated by the fact that the church and that billboard advertisements happened across the



same phenomena or whether they were influenced by each other. Me purposefully tapping into that is part of it and the opposite happens when I'm producing work for the floor. I'm making people put their heads down so that blood pools in the thinky bit that makes people sad...

Which you've done in previous shows?

Yes, and this is part of my fascination with where things go in spaces in that you can make people not see human sized and shaped things on the floor. People will barely recognise them if there's enough stuff in other places and that other stuff doesn't even need to be that big. So yeah, to ruminate on the floor for a second, I was thinking about the grotesque and the sympathetic and how they might exist in the same sort of space and thinking about how they might intertwine. They were the first work I completed in the run up to this show.

*The floor? Did you ever think about reversing the positions of the works?*

No. There's a degree to which I'm playing with what is the floor and what is the wall, I hope, anyway in the colour of the Clones and the colour of the floor and where they are in the space. The fact that the boots are at eye level, which is more or less where the boots would be if you were getting jumped by a gang of thugs or neo-nazis. There's a degree to which I'm thinking about what the floor is constituted as.

*You said you wanted to be open to the possibility of being wrong so I guess since I haven't been very prosecutorial perhaps some questions from the audience will take that tack.*

*[audience member] We were joking around during the install about the white wigs on the Clones looking Warholian, is*

*that intentional or not?*

To a degree. First I was thinking about a guy called Jimmy Saville... I don't know if there's anyone British in the room but yeah I was thinking about Jimmy Saville but then also obviously Warhol is there, which is something I can't deny. It's the space between those two guys that I was thinking of.

*[audience member] Who was the other guy?*

Jimmy Saville was... a bit of a Bill Cosby-figure, essentially, in the United Kingdom. He was famous entertainer, he was beloved by the public, he was eventually knighted and he enjoyed a lot of power and influence as a result of his friendships with government ministers and with Margaret Thatcher. He ended up being given pseudo-governmental positions in that he was allowed to run children's homes and institutions and he basically used them as harems, essentially, where he did dreadful things to the inmate population. Also, I put the wigs on the work on the hand to stop the Clones from looking like skinheads, which they would've done because of the boots I think... but then there's something about putting a wig on something to make it stop looking like a skinhead that I was interested in and I'm interested in those sorts of confusions and working in that sort of space. I particularly appreciate and enjoy the fact that certain friends would come up and say 'oh it's Warhol' and then British friends would come up and say 'oh it's Jimmy Saville... why the fuck is Jimmy Saville on the wall?' but again, there's a degree to which those are things that are privileged information... me talking to you guys right now, but I am happy that they are only things that they appear like that they might be so and that they're not direct references.

*[audience member] No, I think there's lots of different things, there's a pop element to them... almost a cheerful element to them with the bright red, but obviously yeah... whenever I thought I had a solid idea about them I was like "no, that's not right..."*

That they confuse those sorts of immediate readings is important to me. I've been forever interested in heraldry, in the medieval context, and heraldry's relationship to flag making and flag makings relationship to nationalism and so on... I bring it up in the context of the smaller clones in order to mention that there's nationalism in the mix too. Does anyone else have any questions? oh at the back...

*[audience member] I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how you conceive of the function of reference in your work? There's so many tie-ins and underlying concepts that are not necessarily present at the surface or visible and there's the interesting overlap between the art viewing community and the science fiction reading and watching community that is not necessarily as prevalent and I wondered if you had thoughts on the extents to which audiences may or may not come to your work with a firm grounding in the texts that you are thinking about?*

Thank you for that question, that's a very good question. That specifically is something that I am fascinated in. Specifically, two different audiences walking into something. There's a degree to which references can sometimes work in work like hyperlinks, and that's not really something I'm interested in doing so much as I'm thinking about works existing almost like holographs... source A here, source B there, and then something is produced in the middle by

the overlap. I'm interested in an audience A walking in, blocking source A, only getting half of the information but then generating a whole from the information that they receive... and then audience B comes in and blocks source B and so on and so forth. A point where that interest comes from for me is from looking at artworks in institutions and having a wildly different experience of the work than friends and peers who I'm looking at the work with who have different life experiences that force them to see other things entirely. I personally believe that a multiplicity of interpretation and inference in artwork is actually art's greatest strength as a medium as opposed to a text, written, that may have a degree of interpretive space attached but that point more rigidly in one direction. And so to come back more closely to the question you were asking... All the things that I think that end up in a work... there's no way that I could elucidate all of those things. Once upon a time I was making work specifically about grief, whilst in the depths of grief, and there would be no way that I could begin to transmit that information to an audience, and indeed it would be horrible to even try because that would involve me killing people, but yeah... there's something about reference and conceptual development and where those things end up becoming abstract, to a degree, that interests me. I'm always interested in artists who have second careers, or who do other things... but that's an aside. Does that answer your question?

*[audience member] Yes, thank you.*

Ah, sweet.

*If I could butt in, that reminds me that didn't discuss the film... we didn't get round to discussing that the pieces in the show are part of an unfinished ultimate*

*project... a larger project.*

hmm yeah the work in the show for me that feels the most unfinished... the work that feels like it still has space to grow... the work that will be taken apart, and from which new things will be built, is the Black Bastard Bacchus. I sort of inadvertently, by accident, ended up making a seed that I'll end up working from for a long time. Which is to say, this attempt to trap all of one's writing into a video and to have it contained there has ended up being a not wholly successful exercise... I'm interested in that, the failure of that being me going back into the stories, re-editing the stories, the stories not being finished, the stories doing more, more stories coming from the stories, the stories joining up with other stories, becoming longer larger stories, and so on and so forth as opposed to the clones where it's like 'man, they're on the wall and I do not look forward to taking them back off the wall again...' Which is, frankly, in the context of producing a show and being happy about that show being finished and done... is somewhat frustrating but then as an artist and as a creator, I'm glad that the things don't always die when they go on the walls sometimes. Which is something that hopefully none of the works are doing but I think to lesser or greater degrees they might be.



**'The Demon of Regret: New Works by Joseph Buckley' was the culmination of a six month residency at the International Studio & Curatorial Program between the 1st of February to the 31st of July, 2016. Curated by Juliana Cope, the exhibition ran from the 15th of June until the 22nd of July in the year 2016 at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn, New York. The exhibition and residency were made possible through the generous support of The New York Community Trust, The New York State Council on the Arts, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation.**