

***SEEING RED: A RECLAMATION OF  
VIOLENCE ON BEHALF OF A NEW  
AMERICAN ARTIST INSURGENCY***

*HAYDEN MALTESE*

*2024-2025*

# ***ABSTRACT***

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I intend to provide a fresh ideological base for radical American artistic development while detangling the conditioned subservience that pervades the left-leaning populace. This writing historicizes creatives that successfully upended postmodern insular qualities of high art in order to critique the cultural mechanisms at play around them, and as an American draftsman my work takes up similar objectives. Using books, clay, and the electrical circuit, I present obscene containers of information designed to induce political and social fervor, in the hopes that the zeitgeist will find future sanctuary within the disposition of a new resistance.

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# ***ACKNOWLEDGMENTS***

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I would like to extend my deepest gratitude, appreciation, and thanks to Eileen Wallace and Isabelle Loring Wallace. It is hard for me to put into words how much you both have influenced me as an artist and an intellectual. Thank you as well to Martijn van Wagtendonk, Jon Swindler and Jon Vogt for your help along the way, it will always mean a lot.

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

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When a person 'sees red,' they suddenly become very angry. This sensation is usually followed by actions that disturb the accepted parameters of an 'appropriate' emotional reaction. 'Seeing red' is an overflow of passion; the situation at hand can no longer be tolerated through passivity or neutrality. When I envision the catalysis that could lead to such reckless abandon, being on the receiving end of wartime horrors that this country has orchestrated to preserve its hegemony come rushing to the forefront of my mind. I am perpetually troubled by this reality that only exists in our digital periphery; the American body has experienced none of the toll. When I see tiny children being deliberately starved on my screen, when I see bodies being burned alive with U.S military aid, I am outraged. When I imagine someone's entire family being murdered with the push of a button, I am filled with boiling hate and disgust, and these feelings must find materiality. The following writing aims to start a fire of radical potentiality that lies dead and dormant in the heart of left-leaning American society. The art that is present in this exercise will stoke these long neglected embers, finding conceptual precedent amongst some of the heavier hitting political works that reside in postmodernity.

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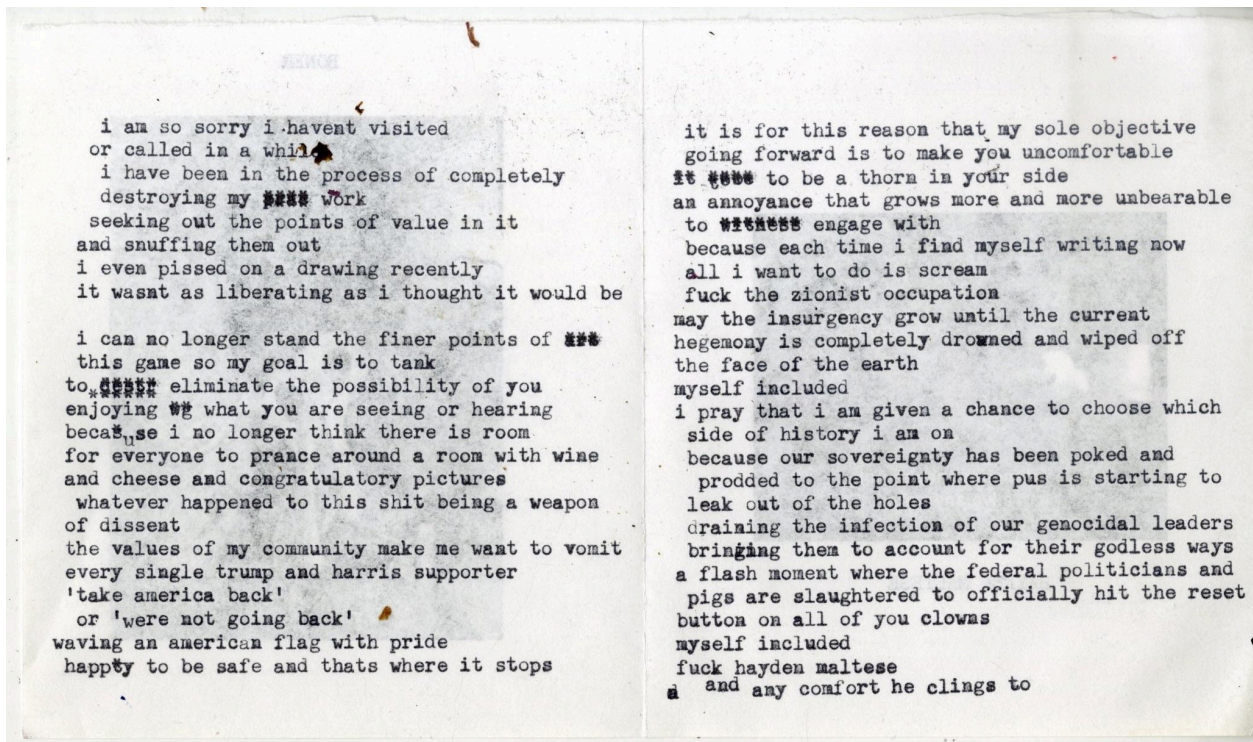
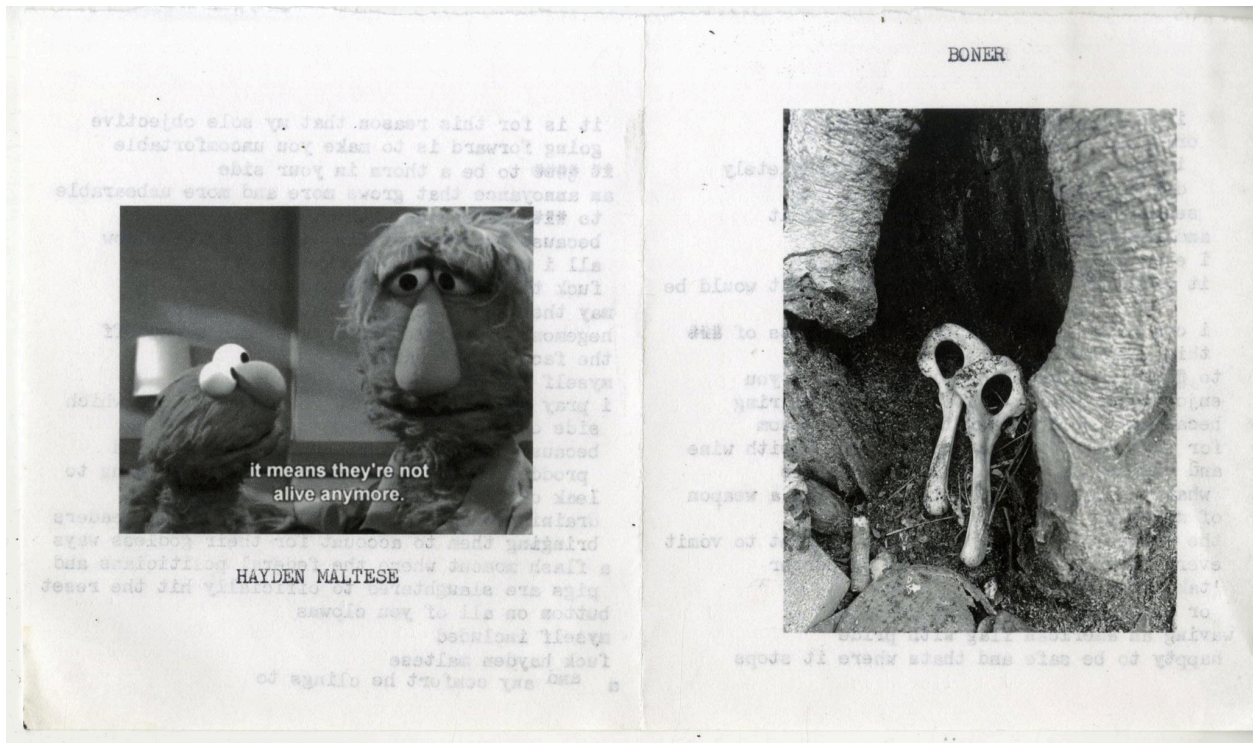
# PART I: THE BOOK

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My books are almost exclusively several page pamphlet bindings or a single piece of paper folded in half. They store my most vulnerable thoughts and concerns, they are where I am most honest. The fragmented nature of their production is carried out knowing that these books participate in a decentralized network, conversing with and sometimes contradicting one another. This is an analysis of the thematic content within four books, *BONER*, *WARDOG*, *POATAN*, and *A RABBIT HOLE*. These books were created in the sequence they are analyzed.

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## SECTION 1.1 ~ BONER



BONER, digital print and typewritten text on a single folio, 2024.



Gerard Malanga and Andy Warhol. *Untitled (The electric chair in a room made silent by signs)*, Thermofax with typewriter and ink on paper, 1964.

## 1.1 ~ *BONER*

The rapidity of these books is loosely modeled after the methodology used by early followers of the Islamic faith as they pieced together and published the Qurán. One of the theories surrounding the book's origin is that those who had listened firsthand to their prophet Muhammad's teachings felt compelled to write his words and revelations down on the odd bits of material they had: papyrus, textile, leather, and bone. Shortly after the Prophet's death different annotators of the period would come together and forge the holy text. The order in which they arranged Muhammad's words could not be chronological, on account of how the information was documented.<sup>1</sup> The Qurán is self referential as the 'clear' and 'blessed book' while bestowing similar titles to the Torah of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus throughout its passages. Jews and Christians alike are referred to as 'people of the book'.<sup>2</sup> The Old and New Testaments provide the epistemological roots of published word within Judeao-Christian western civilization as well.

To frame my work through not only a religious lens but a pop cultural one, Andy Warhol's influence must be recognized as I deploy digital repetitions of image, draining subjects of their former meaning so my writing can inject them with new, albeit murky connotations. The two bones picked clean paired with the memetic quality of Elmo attempting to explain death to his counterpart on the front and back covers of *BONER* bring both the macabre and comedic to the forefront, while the monochromatic presentation also bears a poor man's resemblance to Warhol's *Death and Disaster* series. I also want to pin an especial aesthetic note onto the set of thermofax collaborations done in 1964 by Warhol alongside Gerard Malanga, where the latter's poetry is linked to the former's various printed iterations of death and struggle. In *Untitled*, a stylistic approach normally used in sequential art is deployed; defined within a panel, an anonymous man is strapped into the electric chair. Whether he is alive or dead is

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<sup>1</sup> John Bagot Glubb. *The Life and Times of Muhammad*. pp. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Droge. *The Qurán: A New Annotated Translation*. pp. xiv

## 1.1 ~ *BONER*

unclear, yet rendered arbitrary. Galanga's poetry acts as an existential testament to this iteration of capital punishment, yielding the notion that this occurrence is not an aberration. The viewer shares a moment with the man in the chair as Galanga's words ring out, but it is nonetheless postured as a distant death, something that one might come across in the pages of an old newspaper.

The collaborative nature of Warhol and Galanga's work lends a helping hand to the literary structure of *BONER*, as I appear to address someone else in the beginning of the passage. When this happens in my writing, I picture myself within a confessional theatre, not dissimilar to the practice of Roman Catholics. There are times that responses from the other side of the "confession" come to the surface, and a conversation is established, though this does not occur in *BONER*.

Before the book is opened, we are met with the phallus. The opening text then immediately interrogates the notion of value and its presence within my work, as I express the intent to destroy everything about it that could be deemed 'desirable.' I compare the creation of my art to the production of urine, a waste substance that is associated with low culture. The reader encounters piss, vomit, infection and pus, wallowing in the obscene. What I go on to refer to in the text only supplements this claim, as I describe in multiple facets a violent uprising that would result in the effective dissolution of the United States and its imperial allies. Once this stance is taken, I firmly depart from Warhol, notorious for his endorsement of country and refrain from explicit social opinion.

*BONER* approaches its' obscenities non-visually; the viewer experiences them through the language I have chosen. In the essay *Poetic Language and the Obscene* by Leslie Dunton-Downer, she talks about literary obscenity as a natural occurrence within a set of

## 1.1 ~ *BONER*

linguistics due to the set's inability at times to fully encapsulate a feeling or condition. This inevitably forces people to render obscene extensions of the language in question:

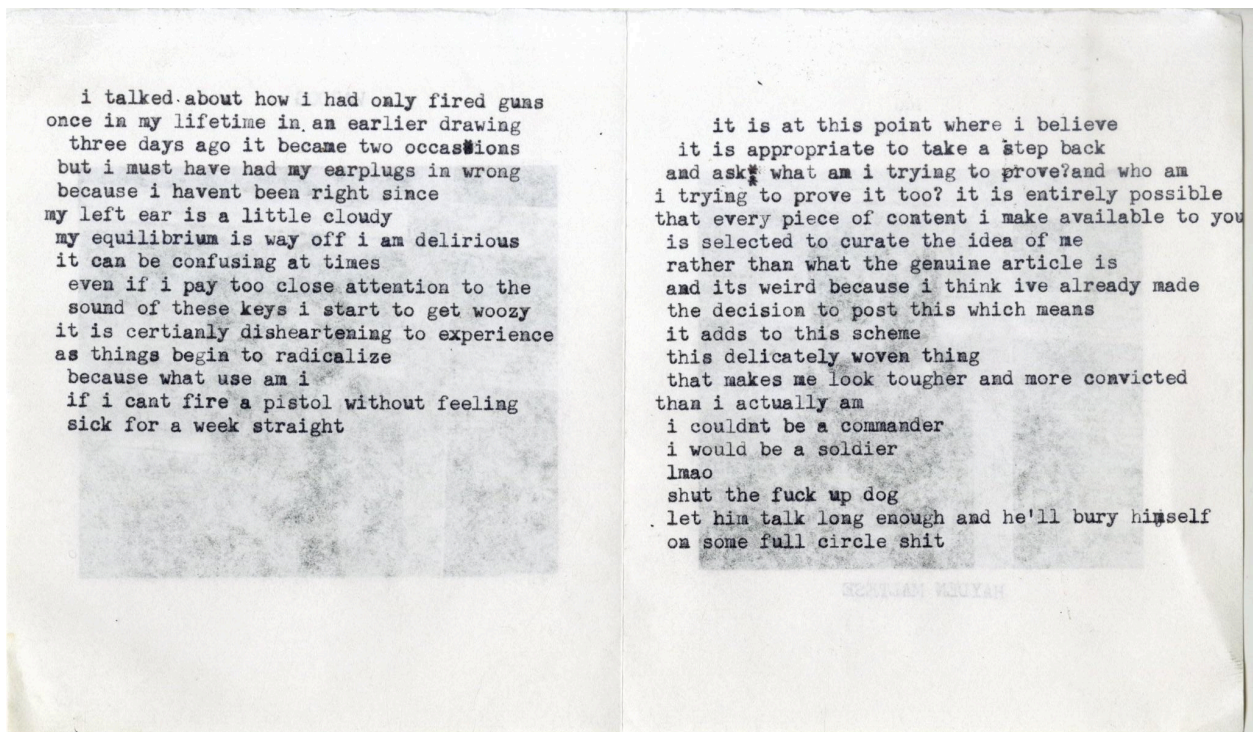
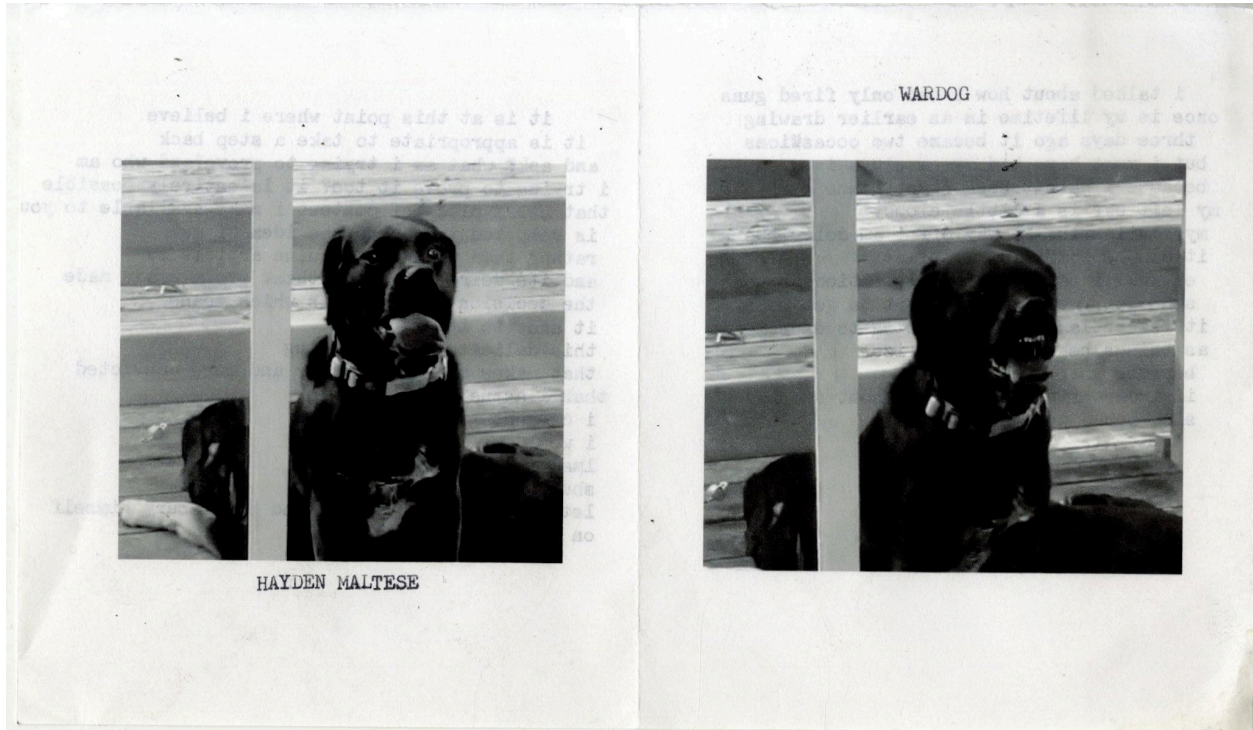
...highly referential language appears to be identified with its referents less problematically, whereas lyrical language tends to insist on disparities between the language system and the worlds it cannot actually *be*... Without the necessary means that may otherwise be provided within lan-guage, the composer turns to the obscene to help convey (whether in a satirical, comical, or other voice) limitations that language presents the speaker. For this reason it is not surprising that artists resort to obscenities to make their points more efficiently... obscenity offers an important meaning vehicle for alternative constructs of selfhood, whether individually or in marginalized collectives.<sup>3</sup>

*BONER* demonstrates this process in its call for total upheaval. These emotions supplant themselves outside the current structure of our society. The federal body shows indifference to the violence it applies abroad while simultaneously condemning the use of that same violence towards them. In turn, the obscenities within *BONER* break into a different world, one where this growing sense of disgust gives way to rogue vigilantism on the grounds that our leaders are 'godless' and 'infected'.

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<sup>3</sup> Jan M. Ziolkowski and Leslie Dunton-Downer. *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*. pp. 27-28.

## SECTION 1.2 ~ WARDOG



WARDOG, digital print and typewritten text on a single folio, 2024.

## 1.2 ~ WARDOG



David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled (Hujar Dead)*, Gelatin silver print, acrylic, screenprint, and collaged paper on board, 1988-89.

## 1.2 ~ WARDOG

Western theology and scripture can sometimes couch the use of force in the notion that those willing to wage war against a corrupted order will have God on their side. Several times the Qurán laments the act of persecution, justifying the fight against those looking to harm you.

*Sūra 2:190* ~ Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression. Surely God does not love the aggressors. 191 And kill them wherever you come upon them, and expel them from where they expelled you. Persecution is worse than killing.

*Sūra 4: 95* ~ Those of the believers who sit (at home) - other than the injured - are not equal with the ones who struggle in the way of God with their wealth and their lives. God favors in rank the ones who struggle with their wealth and their lives over the ones who sit (at home). To each God has promised the good (reward), but God favors (with) a great reward the ones who struggle over the ones who sit (at home).

Saint Augustine of Hippo has endured for his contributions to the establishment of western doctrine and his writings on the human condition as Christendom within the Roman Empire became more and more influential. Also widely recognized for his just war theory, Augustine would spend considerable time trying to square the necessity of war within the functionings of a Christian state. Given Christianity's subsequent religious dominance in the western world after his death, and the manner in which the United States in particular has fostered a global culture

## 1.2 ~ WARDOG

of violence and militancy, Augustine's just war theory is understood to be a foundational tool that western nation states lean on when engaging in conflict. In a letter to Marcellinus, a Roman Catholic official and close friend of Augustine's, he defends the charge that Christianity is incompatible with proper governance according to its perceived passivity at the time.

...With respect to those who, contrary to their own will, need to be set straight, many things must be done with a certain benevolent harshness. Their welfare rather than their wishes must be considered, and this has been praised most lavishly in their [Roman] writings about the ruler of a city. In correcting a son however severely, paternal love is surely never lost sight of. What is not wanted and what is painful is nevertheless done to one who appears to require healing through pain, even against his will. Accordingly, if this earthly republic kept the Christian precepts, wars themselves would not be waged without benevolence, so that, for the sake of the peaceful union of piety and justice, the welfare of the conquered would be more readily considered.<sup>4</sup>

There are numerous examples in which Augustine would write fondly of individuals expressing the sentiment that a people should love their country, and that a state's militia should do what is necessary to preserve their domain. However, the final conclusion that Augustine seems to reach regarding the pursuit of justice is that justice ultimately exists as a virtue within the scope of man's earthly desires. Virtue can exist for the betterment of individuals in this life, it can align with the idea of sound moral values *in this life*. But because virtue, good or bad, is desired for its material impact, never finding itself wholly within God, true and pure justice can never be attained. Paul Ramsey in *Just War Theory* comments on potential flaws within the idea that Augustine reserves justice for one people, but not others.

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<sup>4</sup> Douglas Kries, Michael W. Tkacz, and Ernest L. Fortin. *Augustine: Political Writings*. pp. 208-209.

## 1.2 ~ **WARDOG**

...Something is sought in every human desire, no matter to what it is directed, that is not obtained. That is the created good, and at the same time the misdirected evil of it; for men and States necessarily will and love more than they get in this world. They desire not only some good, or even a good higher than all others, but also the permanent enjoyment of it. An unrectified *nisus* toward the eternal disturbs every people's purpose: that is why they see in their good the Good, in the laws of their peace the conditions of universal peace, and are resolved that this too shall not pass away... The just war theory cannot have meant for him the presence of justice (i.e., the temporary order and form of these divided loves) on one side, its absence on the other. <sup>5</sup>

Therefore, my intention is to scrub some of the Christian nationalist residue off this theory. Based on this interpretation of Augustine, people of this nation that subscribe to monotheistic precepts should also feel the need to create new notions of resistance, and become more comfortable with holding a radical notion of world in their minds. These visions, once suspended, can be molded and malleated to contribute to a new social force, one that we have not yet seen. It is important to note here that I am drawing from theology for the sake of appealing to the masses that prefer to keep God with them. It would be foolish of me to not speak, at least in part, from a theological perspective given the influence that monotheism continues to wield over western civilization. I cannot argue that future iterations of liberation will include a return to careful treatment of religious ideals that people have left in the past. Nevertheless, God remains a factor in our lives.

**WARDOG** is an attempt to locate this untapped sense of militancy within myself. Because my physical association with firearms was/is limited, and it is through guns that people in America

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Ramsey. *Just War Theory*. pp. 18-19.

## 1.2 ~ WARDOG

will be able to organize and strike fear within the authoritarian governing body, I wanted to feel what it was like to fire a gun for the first time in a while. Shooting the pistols temporarily damaged my hearing, which I found incredibly discouraging. I am reluctant to shoot one again because of this. This passage steps on my toes of toughness, it creates a hole in my armor as I look to beat my chest over the need for a concerted uprising; I cannot claim to be exempt from the disconnect that American civilians currently have towards fighting, towards putting one's life on the line in solidarity for a more promising future, one they will likely never see. The covers of this book locks in those flavors. A dog gnashing his teeth against a glass door appears menacing, until one realizes he just wants to be let inside. There is a bark, but the question of whether or not he will bite, remains.

With that said, when persecution, incarceration, and death creep into people's lives their reactions become more hostile and actions become more drastic. I turn to David Wojnarowicz and his experiences as a gay artist in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. His friend and lover, Peter Hujar, would struggle and succumb to the disease in 1987; Wojnarowicz would create *Untitled (Hujar Dead)* in 1988-89. Framed by loud red letters and flattened pieces of U.S currency, adorned by sperm and other cells, Peter Hujar's dead body is shown in nine frames. Seven photographs closely feature his hands and feet, while the other two capture his facial expression in death from various points of perspective. Superimposed over this scene is a soliloquy by Wojnarowicz, who regurgitates the political rhetoric of the period and takes note of people intentionally setting aside their regard for human life because of their religiously fueled hatred. As Wojnarowicz walks himself through this anger, he feels himself lose regard for the moral and social agreements that America expects its citizens to enter into and uphold. He envisions real violence because there is nothing to lose, he knows that he is also sick.

## 1.2 ~ WARDOG

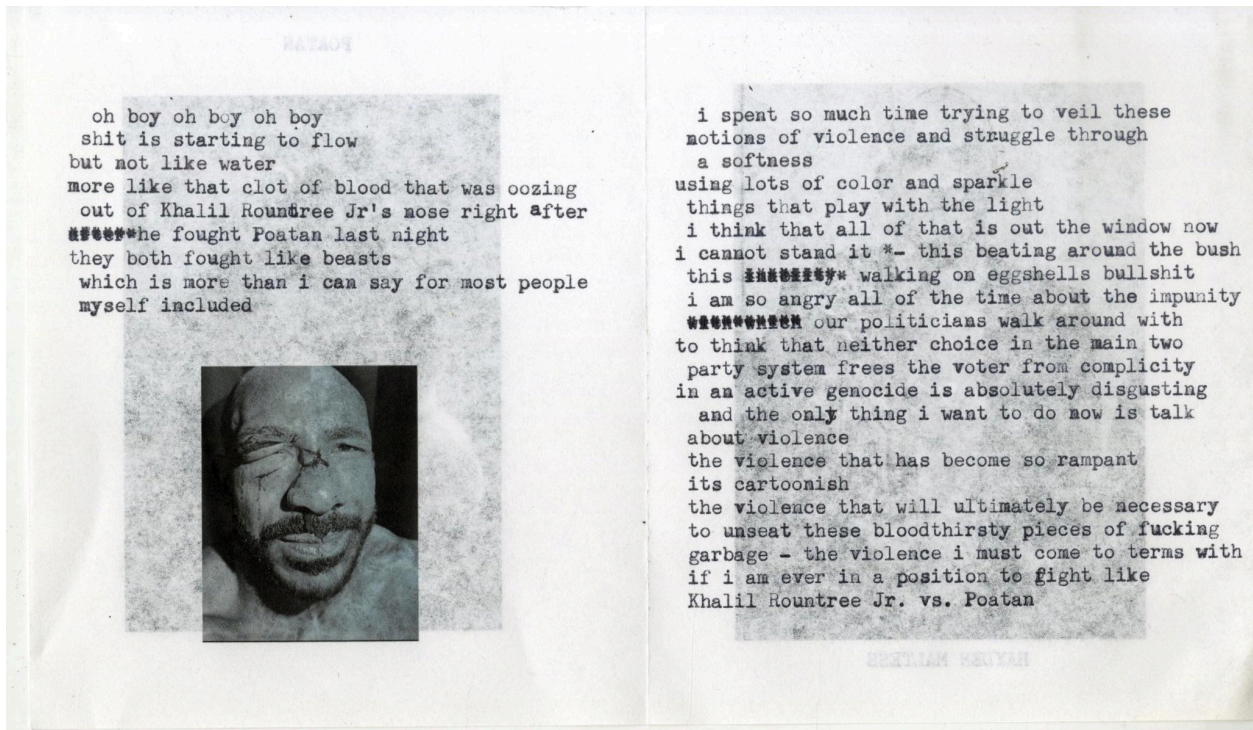
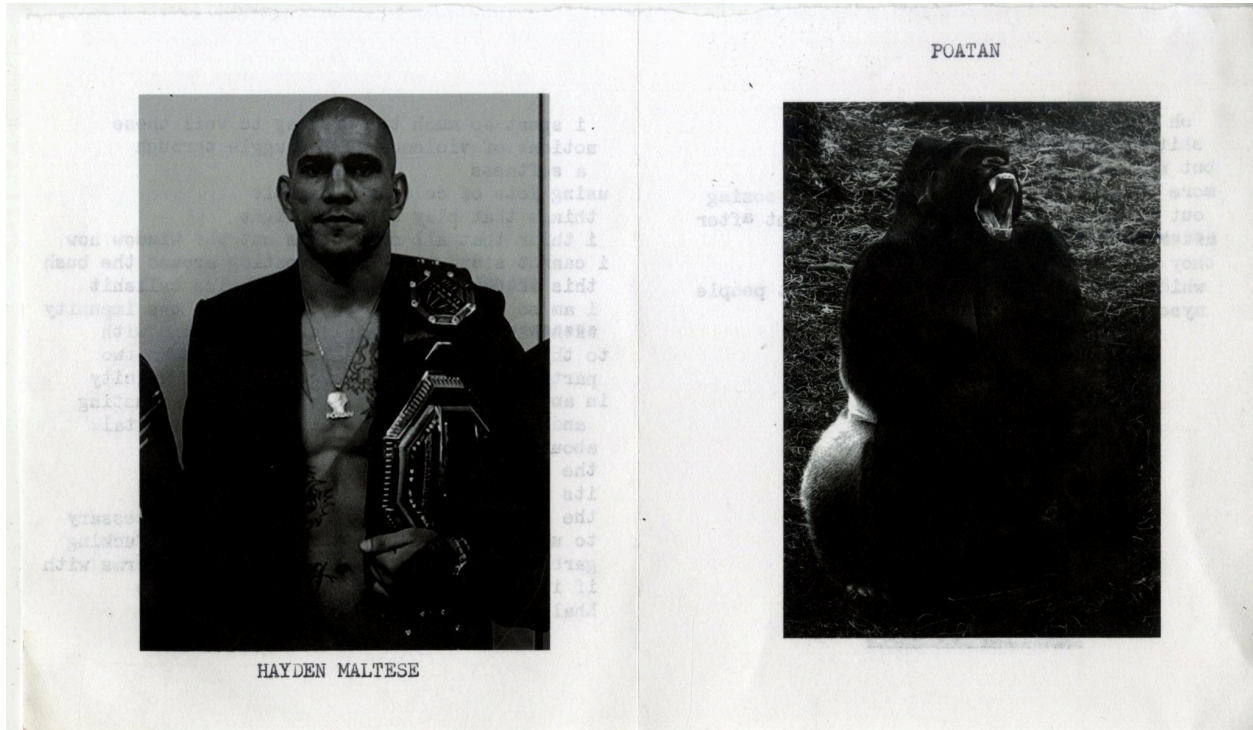
At one point he describes the action of shooting prominent politicians and health officials with blow darts that are dipped in infected blood. He advises these individuals to increase security and to invest in more complex security alarms. Wojnarowicz would produce works of staunch political nature for the remainder of his life, passing away in 1992. *(Untitled) Hujar Dead* is a Polaroid of that cultural moment, the image of what the U.S government had deliberately done still coming into focus. Experiencing unbearable sadness and outrage, and in the midst of knowing his time was limited, Wojnarowicz conceived a work with the strength and weight of iron. His pain has become immovable, what he has spoken on will not be erased.

It is through Wojnarowicz that we witness the tentacles of nation and its ability to occupy a powerful role. A contemporary, developed governing body can pull on the strings of life and death based on state interests; the Reagan administration would have the opportunity to carry out a CDC constructed response to the AIDS epidemic as early as 1985. As the number of cases in the United States rose to over 10,000 that year, Donald Francis, a core propagator of this initial prevention plan, was told to 'look pretty, and do as little as possible' after sending the pitch over to leaders in Washington.<sup>6</sup> This example of administrative brutishness shines light on the unpleasant reality of contemporary bureaucracy: they have consolidated all levers of social dynamics and wield an authority previously reserved for the divine or the transcendent.

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<sup>6</sup> Donald P. Francis. *Commentary: Deadly AIDS policy failure by the highest levels of the US government: A personal look back 30 years later for lessons to respond better to future epidemics.* pp 290-300.

## SECTION 1.3 ~ POATAN



POATAN, digital print and typewritten text on a single folio, 2024.

1.3 ~ POATAN



Raymond Pettibon. No Title (Here's one sent...), pen, ink, and gouache on paper, 2007.

### 1.3 ~ POATAN

Instances of combat on a personal level; the experience of a literal fight congeals within *POATAN*. My description of a flow state using bodily emissions as signifier in the beginning is meant to paint the collective witnessing of a threshold being breached, the glory of physical combat bursting into mental frontiers only understood by those who have done it. People try to get close to the feeling of war, attempting to cram this curiosity into cultural milieus such as organized fighting. The performativity and ceremony that is put on display in these environments shows how we temporarily channel our adulation of the warrior. Frédéric Gros comments in *States Of Violence* on a soldier's inseparability from the virtue of courage:

A pure will of power: the power within myself that demands its fulfillment, its exceeding, its multiplication and its projection... and the sole proof of courage is its revelation... one can say one is courageous only from the moment when one is shown to be so... the capacity to summon strength, make it present and active at the very moment when, in the clammy terror of carnage, the spring suddenly dries up. It is not an overflowing to be contained like the mastery of the passions, but a 'not enough' of strength to be increased. It is a capacity to give to oneself, from within oneself, what one is lacking. 'To get a grip on oneself' is a good way of putting it - to draw strength into oneself and from the self in order to multiply it. It is to place a bet on oneself and win.' <sup>7</sup>

Gros also states in the midst of this passage that those who are courageous in words are cowardly when it comes down to the actual display of it. I am inclined to agree on the subject of *POATAN*. I would also say that opportunities to show the virtues of courage, honor, and respect have been sanitized from the modern field of war. The regard for humanity and treatment of Other erodes as we continue to evolve technologically. *POATAN* uses sanctioned sport to engage in a theatrical and borderline irresponsible sense of ideal war that is firmly

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<sup>7</sup> Frédéric Gros. *States of Violence*. pp 14-16.

### 1.3 ~ POATAN

removed from these very real horrors; horrors that can be unleashed with the push of a button. This book can be characterized as propagandistic as its performative aspects are exposed, healthily mimicking the tendencies and trappings seen in professional bouts. A roaring silverback gorilla on the front cover gives a lazy nod to the well known guerilla warfare, while the light heavyweight champion Alex Pereira graces the back cover. He is called 'Poatan', which means 'Stone Hands' in the Tupi language. Finally, the challenger, Khalil Rountree Jr. is given a battered snapshot within the book, ultimately being the one who folds in a valiant effort. Where my personal, physical role resides in this grand narrative of courage in conflict remains unsettled.

Precarious depictions of violence and sour glory off the back of American iconography invoke Raymond Pettibon through and through. His work looms large over the cultural scents I am sporting; the prolific draftsman has come to embody post pop. Mulling over the psychological condition after the walls separating high art and consumerism had been destroyed, he exposed the overarching mechanism that reigns over the production and consumption of image in our society. Taking a look at *No Title (Here's one sent...)* we are confronted with a circle of naked hooded figures rendered in ink, one hunched over the other. The individuals on the far right and in the background are breaking this pattern, lurching forward in disorientation. There are squirts of text that adorning the piece as Pettibon finds a through line in the zeitgeist where he glues an old football formation to the Geneva Convention. His reference to 'the wedge' in this dueling context is referring to the torture and abuse of prisoners that had taken place at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. One of the most infamous documentations of war crimes committed at this site is a photograph of naked Iraqi detainees with bags over their heads, forced to form a human pyramid as American soldiers Sabrina Harman and Charles

### 1.3 ~ POATAN

Graner smile with their thumbs up behind them. Pettibon accentuates the pointiness of the bags, carefully gesturing to the haunted parallels they share with the pointed hoods of the Ku Klux Klan. It is here that a cultural juicing occurs. Domestic perversion has been inverted, it has successfully been projected onto the foreign body. He goes on to describe the manner in which Americans root for their respective football teams; when a team goes on the road to play a game, it is popular amongst fans to paint them as soldiers entering a hostile environment or going off to war. This behavior repeats itself when it comes to our military dominance over other countries. "Just win, baby!," the late L.A. Raiders owner Al Davis used to say. Pettibon's reference to endless time on the clock follows this same trope of global dominance, while his playful jab at 'far east asia finishing school' (an apparatus for educating stationed American troops) reads like a collegiate student making fun of a rival university. Finally, we are finished off with a fleeting quote attributed to sports writer Grantland Rice, reminding us to prioritize character over victory.

Pettibon's political work conjures up an enchantment where we are able to see the authentic western self through self referentialism. His system of making cannibalizes all facets of our media and ekes out information quickly, but very carefully. The presence of emotion is very matter of fact and machine-like, a hysterical emptiness. In an essay called *After Laughter*, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh endows praise of the highest order to Pettibon's draftsmanship. And if one is able to strip away the greatness and recognition from such a statement, I would humbly ask that my work find some shade under Buchloh's words:

### 1.3 ~ POATAN

Pettibon's extraordinary re-conceptualizations of drawing situate his work within both lines of the dual lineage of the greatest draftsmen of modernity... The first line embraces the legacies of the caricature and the carnival by feigning assimilation to the controlling matrix of the technological or the mass-cultural image. That lineage defines drawing as providing iconic records of the experience of hierarchical power and its violence. Its testimony and travesties indict those who exert oppression and enforce the subject's continuous violation. The second lineage, by contrast, in an ever intensifying proximity to the graffito and to drawing as an erasure or effacement of all depiction condenses its rebellion either in sudden acts of virulent neuro-motoric rage against all iconicity, or by retreating into a sphere of sublime self-control, giving graphic evidence of the carceral existence of a subject framed by repression, conventions, language, and mass-cultural representation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh. *Raymond Pettibon: Here's Your Irony Back - Political Works 1975-2013*, pp. 22.

### 1.3 ~ POATAN



*Documentation of torture and abuse by U.S military personnel at Abu Ghraib Prison, Iraq.*<sup>9</sup>

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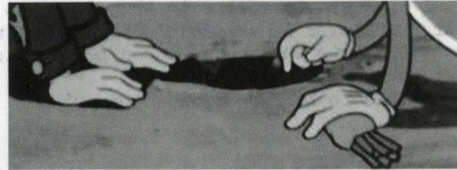
<sup>9</sup> Hersh, Seymour M. "Torture at Abu Ghraib." *The New Yorker*. April 30, 2004.

## SECTION 1.4 ~ A RABBIT HOLE



HAYDEN MALTESE

it is pretty interesting how much i detest  
some of the writing that i compiled the last  
year or so - let me just ask a whole bunch  
of questions that no one has the answer to  
but ask it really poetically so it stuns people  
and leaves them in the murkiest and grayest of  
areas-



one time i was sitting in my friends car  
and a cop passed by in the lot  
and my quote went something like this:  
"i fucking hate pigs \* they should all be  
lined up and shot"  
my friend proceeded to express outrage  
he then proceeded to talk about the job  
he maybe would try to get me for the summer  
and said something like this:  
"security works closely with police during  
events... so you cant be saying things like  
that."  
to my recollection i shrugged it off  
it was a long time ago now  
all ill say is this:  
some shit doesnt change

it is pretty interesting how much i detest  
some of the writing that i compiled the last  
year or so - let me just ask a whole bunch  
of questions that no one has the answer to  
but ask it really poetically so it stuns people  
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areas-

i feel the need to reiterate that i am out to  
destroy whatever is valuable within these words  
i want there to be no way it can be monetized  
i want you to not want this  
i want this to be far beyond appropriate  
or acceptable

i want the proud american to turn their noses  
up at this shit  
and speaking of which let me tell you  
a quick story

one time i was sitting in my friends car  
and a cop passed by in the lot  
and my quote went something like this:  
"i fucking hate pigs \* they should all be  
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HAYDEN MALTESE

## 1.4 ~ *A RABBIT HOLE*

The front cover of *A RABBIT HOLE* bears a few different meanings. It is initially a reference to the conundrum Alice is faced with when she follows the rabbit down into Wonderland. After reaching the bottom of the hole she does some wandering and encounters a little key on a glass table that unlocks a tiny door to a beautiful garden. She is too big to fit through the door; returning to the glass table she finds a potion that shrinks her down to proper size, only to realize that she left the key on the table and is too small to climb up and grab it. She then finds a slice of cake and eats it in an attempt to remedy the situation, but it renders her overly gargantuan. Alice cries a pool of tears over this, shrinking again in the process and is whisked away by the waters to a shore. After reaching dry land she looks around; the door to the garden is nowhere to be found.<sup>10</sup> Here, a playful warning is posed to those that plunge into the depths of chaos and uncertainty in the hopes of reaching their garden. Oftentimes the vision is eluded, and the risk of losing oneself on this quest is grave.

A hole is an opening to a new space that simultaneously acts as the exit to the original space, and vice versa. A hole is liminal, it stands on the precipice of two worlds. The actions and notions in *A RABBIT HOLE* settle within a realm of potentiality; to slip into some of these words and live them out would be an abandonment of the civil codes I have been surrounded by forever. I am interpreting the hole within a mask as the entry/exit between two different modes of being; the same applies to the void that we insert our bodies through to manipulate a puppet. In both instances the wearer is emboldened and given a new sense of purpose as they inject a fanatical world into the real one.

*A RABBIT HOLE* reiterates claims of the previous books, venting over the inadequacies the writings of my past seem to pose, placing another stake in the destruction of value(s). The back cover is a pig being spit-roasted; that does not need further explanation. This book then

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<sup>10</sup> C.S. Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. Chapters 1-3.

## 1.4 ~ A RABBIT HOLE

explicitly floats the proposition of enacting capital punishment onto law enforcement, a vehicle they have always had the keys to. Police mobilization in America is a product of our 'imperial boomerang', and in this lies a deep source of my contempt. I also view this as evidence of the need to collectively galvanize against them. The development of their tactics are directly tied to colonial holdings that the United States warred over in the late 19th and turn of the 20th century. American service members were responsible for administering martial order in numerous foreign lands, consequently killing and imprisoning members of various insurgent groups. Imperial military strategy, strapped with arms, attack mapping, intelligence divisions, mobile forces and all, was subsequently used as the model to fortify the police. August Vollmer, a special forces soldier in the Philippine-American war and the 'father of American policing,' described their early operations as "a war against the enemies of society."<sup>11</sup> My disdain for the police is further seeded in their historical fraternization with vigilante right wing extremism, particularly the Ku Klux Klan. While the police are descendants of pre/post - Civil War slave/freedmen patrols, the KKK was referred to by Reconstruction era senator Reverdy Johnson as the "legitimate offspring of the patrols."<sup>12</sup> The former is now the institution responsible for upholding law and order; the latter is "maligned" as an extremist group. Their origins will always remain entangled. The police are the national apparatus responsible for feeding the justice system to fill the larger mechanism of mass incarceration. As we see federal power consolidated in an increasingly authoritarian fashion, the police as a paramilitary organization and vehicle of political suppression will continue to be bolstered. Civilian white-nationalist groups will be free to corroborate with law enforcement and in turn right-wing vigilante exercises of armed force will be given further leniency. As backs continue

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<sup>11</sup> Julian Go. *Policing Empires: Militarization, Race, and the Imperial Boomerang in Britain and the US*. pp. 105-141.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Newton. *The Ku Klux Klan: History, Organization, Language, Influence and Activities of America's Most Notorious Secret Society*. p.6.

#### **1.4 ~ A RABBIT HOLE**

to be pressed against the wall, the unfortunate necessity to reclaim the second amendment on behalf of the resistance will be of great importance.

The thematics offered in these analyses are meant to provide artistic precedent and context to an ideological reconstitution of American resistance. To do that, these books veer into the sensationalistic. They encourage the reader to get pissed off, to identify the enemy and ultimately place all options on the table in order to fight for something bigger than themselves. But this idea is built precariously and at times collapses through personal concession as I indict myself, my capacity to be courageous remaining in question. How does one walk this type of talk? These books are containers that hold intrusive thought: the moment of no return burning through the mind and not yet the body.

# PART II: CLAY

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## AN EXAMPLE OF CREATIVE ACTION THAT EMBODIED A COMMUNITY:

*Mingei* was an ideology formulated in 1920's Japan by a philosopher named Yanagi Muneyoshi. The school of thought attempted to capture an idealist representation of artistry; that which had been successfully removed from the self-consciousness of the artist. He witnessed ceramic vessel production within the Japanese village of Sarayama, and its intimate relation to their society allowed this pottery to enjoy a 'true' beauty, or *mingei*.

Potters were ordinary craftsmen who had no pretensions to fame... The community of potters and their work were "all tradition," unchanging since the first kiln had been fired in 1705. They were also "close to nature"; clay was prepared and pounded by water- powered clay crushers; pots were thrown on a kick wheel, dried in the sun, then glazed with local raw materials and fired in a wood-fuelled climbing kiln. All this was "natural": modern machinery was not used at all. (Yanagi 1931:6-1 1)"

However, this projection of Yanagi's philosophical ideal onto their small community would cause a disruption in their "ecological equilibrium" due to the commercial recognition from buyers outside of their village.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Brian D. A. Morean. *Japanese Social Organization and the Mingei Movement*. 1981, pp 42-56.

## SECTION 2.1 ~ LUST MOUND



*LUST MOUND (rear view), ceramic and glaze, 2024.*

2.1 ~ LUST MOUND



LUST MOUND (profile)

2.1 ~ LUST MOUND



*LUST MOUND (frontal view)*

## 2.1 ~ LUST MOUND

Clay is endowed with matters of divine creation in passages of New Testament apocrypha and the Qurán. Parallel tales are told of Jesus Christ as a child fashioning birds from clay, either breathing into them or clapping His hands over them to give them life.

*Sura 5:110* ~ O Jesus son of Mary, recall My favor upon you and upon your mother, how I supported you with the Holy Spirit. You spoke to the people from the crib, and in maturity. How I taught you the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And recall that you molded from clay the shape of a bird, by My leave, and then you breathed into it, and it became a bird, by My leave...

*Pseudo Matthew 26, 27* ~ And it came to pass, after Jesus had returned out of Egypt, when He was in Galilee, and entering on the fourth year of His age, that on a Sabbath day He was playing with some children at the bed of the Jordan. And as He sat there, Jesus made to Himself seven pools of clay... And it came to pass, after these things, that in the sight of all Jesus took clay from the pools which He had made, and of it made twelve sparrows ... He struck His hands together, and said to His sparrows: Fly! And at the voice of His command they began to fly... And when those that were there saw such miracles, they were filled with great astonishment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Walker, trans. *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*. 1949, pp.16-52.

## 2.1 ~ *LUST MOUND*

Apocryphal stories provide foundational context to how *LUST MOUND* must be dissected. The mountainous pile that accumulates in this composition is centered by a small vessel crafted out of a dark clay body. When one looks closely, this vessel has wings, referencing the aforementioned scripture. With this piece placed in a role of divine containment, it leads one to draw comparisons to the Holy Grail. The Grail's origin story stems from varying medieval Arthurian romances. In nearly every case, the Grail was placed in the rarified air of Christ as the glimmering chalice He drank from at the last supper, and later the cup with which Joseph of Arimathea collected His blood after the crucifixion. In the Gospel of Nicodemus, another New Testament apocrypha, it is said that after Jesus' death, Joseph's faith sustained him after being imprisoned by Jewish elders on the charge of burying Him. A Burgundian poet named Robert de Boron would build off of this scripture in one of his romances at the start of the thirteenth century, asserting that Joseph drank the blood of Christ from the Holy Grail to survive in prison, nodding to the Eucharist sacrament. In the tale, Joseph would become the Grail's first protector after the resurrected Christ appears to him in a vision and frees him. Many different authors would continue to distort the legend of the Grail, building on conspiracy, lore, and translative missteps over the course of hundreds of years. For example, conspiracy mythologist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall framed poet Wolfram von Eschenbach's term '*templeisen*' (guardians of the Grail in his German rendition of the romance) as language referential to the Knights Templar, which has consequently situated the Grail's existence within the organization's cloudy historicity. The Templars were a French Catholic military order that flourished in Europe and the Levant for most of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, acquiring a vast amount of capital, land, and influence in the process. The Templars would be driven from the Holy Land by Muslim forces circa 1300 C.E. and upon

## 2.1 ~ LUST MOUND

their return to France they would face persecution at the hands of monarch King Philip IV and Pope Clement V, whose aims were to consolidate their own political and religious power. One of the accusations lobbied against the Templars was the heretical act of worshipping an idol referred to as 'Baphomet', a term known to be a derogatory or misunderstood variant for the name 'Muhammad' at the time. They fell prey to the Inquisition; being tortured to gather confessions with some members being burned at the stake as a result. They would officially be dissolved in 1312. A separate subject known as the Cathars would also be conspiratorially linked to the Grail for various reasons. The Cathars, a formidable religious group situated in southern France around the same time, were targeted over their rejection of Catholic Christendom, ultimately being subjected to a crusade and Inquisitory measures from the papacy and French monarchy as well. Their leaders were executed and many others were massacred, while some were able to escape into obscurity before the final siege of their fortress in 1243. Legend now posits that the Cathars who fled the state's clutches that night took the Holy Grail with them. The collective suppression of these two groups, along with myth-making and speculative claim surrounding Templar secrets and the Catharist flight has linked the two histories together, melding them into a popular overarching tale against tyranny.<sup>15</sup>

At the risk of being long winded I am telling this story because the legend of the Grail has served as a hyper-imagined emblem for culture snuffed out over deviation from the 'official' combination of Christian Church and State. It is documented that some of the Templar's practices included alternative forms of worship, many members learned Arabic, and they were known to associate closely at times with a group known as the Assassins, sort of the Islamic

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<sup>15</sup> Juliette Wood. *The Holy Grail: History and Legend*. 2012, pp. 1-86.

## 2.1 ~ *LUST MOUND*

equivalent of the Templars. These are natural forms of assimilation that were painted as antithetical to God by powerful individuals whose underlying motivations were to extract the wealth and influence from a group that was deemed a threat. In turn, *LUST MOUND* draws from sources deemed undesirable or dangerous to western administrations of rule; it is a bastion trying to stay afloat in a sea of American mass media drool. Rudimentary illustrations of Jim Henson's *Sesame Street* characters climb and melt over one another as a sludge is built up. I have come to associate this franchise with its impact as a global youth entertainment apparatus that stems from the United States. I find it unsettling to think about *Sesame Street* being tasked with the education of children in foreign countries, because it assumes the responsibility of instilling systems of value that are not rooted in their respective communities. The show's intentions, good or bad, become irrelevant in this context. The mere fact that it maintains a global presence means it is a tool that can be used to preserve and encourage Western ideals. Their representation is subsequently marred within this residue, which emulates an excessive accumulation of semen.

Semen, and its distinction as a bodily emission generated exclusively by males has long been used to hierarchically define social life. Aristotle wields semen about in his *Generation of Animals*, where he claims that it is a substance with immaterial qualities, a product that is responsible for giving life and form to matter. He would ultimately use form and movement to characterize man, while woman was deemed inert matter. Because men were 'active', they generated more heat, which enabled them to distill this life-giving concoction. And because Aristotle associated semen's heat and its whiteness with an infusion of inner *pneuma*, or 'hot air', he also compared semen to the material makeup of a star:

## 2.1 ~ *LUST MOUND*

There is, contained in the semen of all creatures, an agent that makes their semen fertile, namely what is called heat. Now this heat is not fire or any substance of that kind, but the breath stored up in the semen and in the frothy material and the natural property inherent in the breath, which is analogous to the element belonging to the stars.<sup>16</sup>

This particular bodily emission bestows upon men a divine essence that women lack, according to Aristotle. While his scientific observations have obviously become antiquated, his foundational systems of gender dynamics have stood the test of the time, much to the detriment of contemporary socio-economic equality. In *Images of Bliss: Ejaculation, Masculinity, Meaning*, Murat Aydemir insightfully points out that Aristotle's observations on the physical character of semen can only be noted once it has exited a man's body. At this point, the semen loses the precious attributes of reproduction while also losing the sensory qualities that garner it uniqueness in the eyes of the philosopher.<sup>17</sup> To that end, *LUST MOUND* navigates and wades through a copious application of *ejaculated* semen, where it is crusting over and losing its potency without a host. A small star is also perched at the top of the vessel, eluding interaction with the material it allegedly shares divination with. Semen and its conceptual baggage are used in this sculpture to lasso commentary on the social failures of dominant western thought, while connotations of the Holy Grail demonstrate western failure to exercise religious tolerance.

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<sup>16</sup> Andrea Falcon and David Lefebvre. *Aristotle's Generation of Animals : A Critical Guide*. p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Murat Aydemir. *Images of Bliss: Ejaculation, Masculinity, Meaning*. pp. 1-25.

## SECTION 2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE



*SMORES SEASON, ceramic and glaze, 2024.*

2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE



*PIG BILE, ceramic and glaze, 2024.*

2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE



Philip Guston, *The Studio*, oil on canvas, 1969.

## 2.2 ~ *SMORES SEASON* / *PIG BILE*

*SMORES SEASON* and *PIG BILE* turn the paradigm of the Ku Klux Klan in on itself, revealing its consequential reflection in behavior amongst the American masses. I want to set the stage by quoting Clémence Mathieu out of an essay he wrote for the publication of *Power Mask*:

Most European masquerades end by setting fire to Mister Carnival, a doll made of straw or clothes that symbolizes the carnival or masquerade. After being symbolically blamed for all the community's mistakes in the preceding year and being sentenced to death, he is burned or drowned...Masked rituals are constantly evolving in order to adapt to society's demands. This adaptation is a condition for their survival. As the tangible testimony of an intangible tradition, the mask (and, by extension, the costume) is definitely linked with the identity of the person wearing it but also, on a larger scale, with the identity of the community.<sup>18</sup>

This summation of European mask ceremony bears visual and sentimental similarity to Klan activity. Cross burning ceremonies are immediately evoked here, and the organization is well known for its deranged rhetoric that blames Other for the plight of white society. The white pointed hood of the KKK is *the* mask that runs synonymous with the identity of the United States, and their history of xenophobically charged violence and effective manipulation of American politics is well understood. Their racist ideologies have now been reinvigorated in the wake of Trumpism, and *SMORES SEASON* uses the KKK to umbrella this enemy. In this piece, the hooded figures are instantly recognizable and generate discomfort in numbers. They are painted onto handfuls of cone-clay which have been melted down very slightly so that the final product reads like smushed marshmallows, or crusted-over fluff. The rectangular ceramic frame can be loosely interpreted as an oven tray; they are ready to be roasted. I should also note that hunters generally refer to sections of the calendar year as 'duck season'

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<sup>18</sup> Mathieu, Clémence. *Power Mask: The Power of Masks*. pp. 147-150.

## 2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE

or 'deer season;' within that window it is appropriate to kill that specific animal. Perhaps these klansmen are in the crosshairs of a band of rifles, or maybe they are already dead and are now floating in the clouds. *PIG BILE* is another blunt illustration of the connective tissue shared between law enforcement and the Klan, as I mentioned earlier in this writing the origins of the police and the KKK are intertwined despite the differences in their contemporary appearance and status. On this wall-hanging sculpture, Porky the Pig's gaze is rigid and fixed while flashing his grin. He exposes the inner workings of law and order with his smile, as the klan's pointed hoods posture as repetitive rows of teeth. The presence of cone-clay in this work is compositionally pervasive and vaguely nods to Porky foaming at the mouth, a symptom seen in animals with rabies. The final motif of *PIG BILE* is its elliptical contour, which resembles a mirror. It is here that the suggestion of reflection becomes most active; stressing that as long as Americans continue to abide by the rules and standards of policing, our society will reflect the longstanding values and morals of white supremacy.

In these two works I am advocating that we treat racist extremist groups (and the cops) with the same hostility that they have effectively deployed towards minority groups for over a century and a half. What is troubling about this notion is that I am consuming their role: I am proposing their ruthlessness be turned on them. And when violence is met with more violence, we see ourselves in those we are fighting.

Philip Guston's later work bears the 'hood' as an example of enemy within the self. His klansmen paintings offer alternate worlds borne from the belly of the beast, which Guston produced to 'get behind the mask.' His fascination with a primary perspective of evil led him to abandon the abstract for the allegory, painting out scenes of hooded men moving throughout

## 2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE

the quasi-private sectors of their lives. In *The Studio* we see a klansman smoking and painting a portrait. Dropping through an ambiguous set of red curtains at the top of the canvas is a sole light bulb that illuminates the room. Given Guston's various works that nod to the hand of God emerging through the clouds from around the same time, it is fair to infer that this lightbulb is placed in a similar vein. While Guston treats the hooded painter as a source of self-reference, he is not alone in the room. His right hand holds a paintbrush, while also forming a gesture similar to both God and Adam in Michelangelo's *The Creation of Man*. Guston seems to paint himself reaching for God. In failing to reach Him, Guston is instead compelled to produce an image of man's (his own) folly. This religiously charged narrative subverts the theories of 'pure' painting that dominated artistic circles in the late sixties/early seventies. He was able to slip free of the notion that painting must refer back to itself, reinserting the will of the artist into the creative equation. This formed a new iteration of romanticism, one that provided footing for the late twentieth century artist to move as a sociopolitical critic of their environment once more, as opposed to them having to tip-toe around codes of concept that had become increasingly rigid and sterile.

The element of the mask or emblem as a social unifier is something that cannot be swept under the rug in the investigation of this work. We can conclude that vile people are more powerful and influential in large groups under their KKK hoods. The mask and the uniform allow these individuals to act out the darkest parts of the human mind because it is a shared experience for them. But because they have never conflicted with state interests, most of these people take off their masks and lead normal lives, tainting the societies they live in, using violence in other forms to twist and contort it to their liking.

## **2.2 ~ SMORES SEASON / PIG BILE**

This country has and always will be a petri dish for white power, inoculating it into one generation after the next. While racist, eugenicist inspired hate will forever sit on the wrong side of history, its ideologies continue to endure and shape this nation accordingly. Therefore, it is imperative that we claim a symbol to serve our own fight. A banner under which those who are dedicated to dissent in this country can find their sense of togetherness and collectively apply radical pressure to the bureaucracy.

# PART III: THE ELECTRIC CIRCUIT

\*

*alright well here i am tell me what's new*

*tell me what you need to tell me*

*the truth is in this moment*

*everything is still with a rushing sound accompanying it*

*the truth is i have become intensely disillusioned by the work i have made*

*and the institution it associates with*

*the truth is i seem to be very happy*

*but when no one is around*

*an immense weight is placed on my shoulders*

*i don't think i am happy by myself because i understand my defects and fears so accurately*

*and i understand what must be done to put myself on the right path*

*yet there is another thing inside of me that that is not of that substance*

*this other thing pours an overwhelming sensation over me and tells me that i am afraid of these things for a reason and says that there is a bigger list of reasons as to why i haven't overcome them at this point*

*the truth is when no one is around i am a coward a cremudgin \*\*\* curmudgeon? and a judgemental soul*

*i do think that i carry hate in my heart for the world but also for myself*

*it is an intense one because as i have said before*

*i consider myself very childish*

*i consider my psychological makeup to be weak  
yet capable of producing this product  
this effective mixing of learnedness and primacy  
that simply  
accumulates  
it takes up alot of space  
and the truth is when i make it  
i feel most at peace yet most at odds with myself  
because it has the most sickening stillness  
and i want it to contain blinding motion  
i want it to rush me and try to fight me and cry with me i want it to experience all of the emotions  
that coursed through me when i made it  
but it does none of those things  
it stares back at me lifeless  
and yet i use the word 'stare' to describe it  
because it is still something  
but not life  
rather a secretion of life  
an ooze  
a funk  
a bad smell  
a piece of trash or shit that has inconvenienced you  
even though at one point you needed what does not remain  
of that trash or piece of shit  
you needed it to keep you moving*

*i think i would be totally cool with shutting it down and calling it quits because then i will  
have completed my transformation into waste*

*into a byproduct*

*into a piece of glass or clay that was once part of something whole*

*unlocking a function for me*

*that i did not see before*

*~ H*

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## SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2



*BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2, video, CRT televisions, media players, push buttons, toggle switches, electrical wire, wood, 2025.*

**SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2**



*Military Recruitment Ad. Illustrated by Linas Garsys*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Hunt. *Army Recruitment Ads Look Quite Different Under Trump*. Washington Times, February 2024.

### ***SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2***

In the final piece that will be presented here, a skinny wooden monolith sits in space. Three buttons and three toggle switches poke out of the surface of the pedestal. They are not organized or placed in any particular order. There are numerous wires that protrude through small holes in the sides of this object; they lead to three powered-off television monitors, three quarter inch audio jacks, and three amplifiers which are emitting a consistent hum. When one button is pressed, a video is casted onto one of the three monitors. When all the buttons are pressed, one sees two camera angles flanking the back of a man strung up by his arms with black cords, and the center vantage point shows the entire direct front of his body, where one notices that he is also bound at the ankles. An individual behind the bound man takes a wooden stake and begins to rapidly carve an inverted triangle into the victim's back; his skin raises and turns red from the stake's sharp pressure. You can see people in the room filming, but their identities are blurred from view. The man who is tied up wiggles tremulously and is given very little time to react to each drive the perpetrator makes into his back, who is approaching this scarification methodically. This goes on for about ten minutes; the video ends when the torturer stops and walks out of the frame. We are given a few suspended moments of the victim alone on screen, his skin rubbed away and burned into the shape of an inverted red triangle.

Audio is not available through the push buttons, but the video(s) must be playing in order to access the sound. When a toggle switch is thrown, a line of noise is established through one of the amplifiers. It contains bits of harsh noise, poetry, recorded music, lines from television shows, commentary on sports, politics, etc., and the track is chopped with dead air between clips. When all three toggle switches are thrown you are given an uninterrupted stream of disoriented mass media that quickly dances between amplifiers and immerses the space. There is no path to any audio that the video could have potentially generated.

### ***SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2***

The only material that may refer back to the man being tortured is a soliloquy scattered between the noise lines, and it is recited three times. Once by Joe Biden, once by Donald Trump, and once by Elmo. It says:

The truth is I thought it needed to be bloodier, to say the things it needed to say. But then I thought about what it would look like if he had been bloodied to a level I thought to be correct. And if that had happened, would my view towards the thing be harsher still, and would it only come to completion in my mind if someone was taking his life from him, to sacrifice for all the fucking blood that has flown in the name of this wasteland of a nation.

### **SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2**

This clip ponders taking a person's life as atonement for the corruption of State. The voices of prominent U.S politicians in third person are used as masks for the artist to discuss his own restraint, concluding that the action should have been pushed further, potentially finding resolve only in death. Completion in relation to death can be observed in both military conquest and Abrahamic theology, while dying for a nation's sins vaguely echoes the Crucifixion.

The use of an inverted red triangle is known historically to have been donned on the flag of the Arab Revolt in 1917, and it has been used in multiple flag iterations of pan-arabist nation building since then. But more recently, this icon's association has taken on some complexities. It was featured heavily in pro-Palestinian action on college campuses following the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip in October 2023. As people noted its usage at these demonstrations, its origins and multifaceted meaning began to be the subject of debate. Since the start of the war, the red triangle has been used by Hamas' military wing to designate Israeli targets in war footage.<sup>20</sup> It has now also been spotted on posters within the Burj al- Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon; and it is heavily spray painted and stenciled throughout the walls of the camp as well.<sup>21</sup> The red triangle is a new graffiti that is giving zeal to an entire generation of young Palestinians who have grown up stateless, but now wish to take part in the resistance as they bear witness to the ethnic cleansing and genocide of their homeland. To mimic Hamas, the IDF has even gone so far as to use the triangle in footage of their own, allegedly with the message "our triangle is stronger than yours".

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<sup>20</sup> Natalie Stechyson. *What does the inverted red triangle used by some pro-Palestinian demonstrators symbolize?* CBC News, June 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Simone Foltyn. *'We are with them': support for Hamas grows among Palestinians in Lebanon.* The Guardian, February 2024.

### **SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2**

The red triangle was a symbol used by the Nazis to designate political prisoners in death camps during the Holocaust. This becomes extremely significant, given the staggering number of Jews that were murdered in this system of destruction. One cannot separate Israel's development and emergence from the horrors of the Third Reich, therefore it would be irresponsible not to mention this connotation. Here, we run into some complicated issues that must be parsed out.

Firstly, it is important to stress once more that the red triangle was used to designate political prisoners *specifically*. A pink triangle was also used by the Nazis to designate homosexuals, meaning that these symbols were not demarcations applied to all victims of the death camps. While there were certainly Jews that met their deaths wearing these two triangles, neither was a marker applied to Jews *specifically*.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, in America we have been herded into a very interesting social environment, where criticism of the modern state of Israel is conflated with antisemitism, giving those in power a defined reason to suppress pro-Palestine demonstration. The inverted red triangle has been strapped with some of this hyperbolic baggage; its use has been banned by the Senate of Berlin and it is quickly becoming known in American politics as a symbol that 'glorifies terrorism by Hamas', a sharp departure from its meaning to displaced Palestinians. President Donald Trump himself has amplified American hostility towards the triangle, reposting an article in the Washington Times that sports a military ad as its cover image. It shows a soldier in military uniform with a T.V for a head, and on its screen is an inverted red/pink triangle with a circle slash through it.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Natalie Stechyson. *What does the inverted red triangle used by some pro-Palestinian demonstrators symbolize?* CBC News, June 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Hunt. *Army Recruitment Ads Look Quite Different Under Trump*. Washington Times, February 2024.

### **SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2**

Israel and the United States are not beyond reproach over their policy and conduct regarding this war. Neither country will ever be an orator of the Jewish people; their actions will never speak for a religious group that has spread across the world, proudly and defiantly lasting thousands of years to see the rise and fall of countless empires. The following is fact: In 2025, the United States and Israel are imperial allies, and with U.S backing the Israeli Defense Forces have managed to contort their society into a social reincarnation of the Nazi regime, there is no way around it. Palestinians bearing the red triangle in the 21st century will be remembered as the endurers of genocide, no different than those who bore it during the Holocaust. The inverted red triangle being the subject of scarification onto an individual tethered in the position of Christ in *BTWWTRW2* observes Christianity's role in the realization of Nazi Germany and its role in the actions carried out by the current U.S/Israeli alliance.

The Nazi attitude is generally defined in the rearview mirror as a series of fundamentally anti-Christian pursuits. But both confessions of Christianity would dominate the theological aura of Germany during World War I, so much so that the Christian clergy within the nation postured the Great War as a confrontation with God's enemies. When Germany lost the war, many Germans believed they had failed God. This resulted in a social desire to radically reinterpret Christian doctrine and potentially establish a new denomination of Christianity that did away with the Old Testament. Germany took principles of theology so seriously leading up to the Third Reich that they instilled the will of God into Germany and thus into Hitler. The precepts of Christianity were always at play, even as the Nazis rejected it.<sup>24 25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Steigmann-Gall. *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945*. pp. 1-25.

<sup>25</sup> Richard L. Rubenstein. *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*. pp. 1-30.

### **SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2**

Since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, Christian Zionism is an ideology that has been strongly backed by evangelical Protestantism. It claims that a Jewish national homeland being restored to the Levant was foretold in the Old testament, and will set the stage for Christ's return. This Christian theory has consistently enjoyed popularity in the United States, surging particularly after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The present day U.S./Israeli pact is now ironclad, and because their actions are set out to preserve the Bible's legacy, their pursuits are painted as divine and non-negotiable. Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a speech to Congress in 2015 that practically spilled over with biblical references, using the 4,000 year old Jewish cause to provide religious logic behind bolstering Israel's military in the face of Iran's militant Islamic threat. He evokes Moses, saying that the prophet was overlooking the chambers as he spoke on behalf of Israel to the U.S. At the end of the speech, Netanyahu references Deuteronomy 31:7, when Moses tells Joshua to be "strong and resolute" in clearing out the land promised to the Israelites. The book of Joshua, known for its description of ruthlessly conquering the Levant, is undeniably relevant in contemporary U.S. political atmosphere.<sup>26</sup>

The monolith's interface gives the viewer a set of controls that are inherently limited. The pushing of buttons and the throwing of switches are the physical steps a person takes to fire a missile or drop a bomb. In the instance of *BTWWTRW2* one can conjure up a scene of torture. One is also given the option to turn the televisions off if they are bothered, but the video does not pause. It continues to cycle through, and the problem is not solved, it is developing out of view. When someone levels a building from the air they fly away, the grief and terror and agony they have generated is out of sight, and therefore out of mind.

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<sup>26</sup> Havrelock, Rachel. *"The Joshua Generation: Israeli Occupation and the Bible."* pp. 1-22.

### ***SECTION 3.1 ~ BEAT THE WHITES WITH THE RED WEDGE 2***

The notion of control in this respect is obliterated, it is exposed as temporal. If the viewer chooses not to engage with this footage, nothing else is accessible to them in the work. They have to sit with the image and sift through nonsensical mass media if they desire more information. But the sounds are also off-putting, very loud and laced with profanity, and there is possibility of a jump scare depending on when a toggle switch is thrown. This will likely annoy some people, even giving them reason to turn it off in embarrassment and not interact with the piece any further.

# ***CONCLUSION***

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Americans can engage in the harsh realities of our nation only for so long, because we have the option to let it lie. Our society has become intensely paranoid with the violence of Other while unable to grasp the post-WWII intensity of our own global order. There is a disconnect between ourselves and what the rest of the world feels underneath our yoke. We are herded through mass culture while being protected by the most powerful military in world history, dulling our penchant for collective sacrifice, with the creative being no exception to this rule. If we are to chip away at this goliath and reawaken the fight, the radicalization of our art is the only option. The inverted red triangle is the symbol of a new resistance, it has struck fear into the heart of the West and will unite dissenters going forward. In the coming American struggle, art must be a weapon, not a point of escape.

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