

2017

TITLE: "Of Elsewhere"

by,

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B.F.A. Arizona State University, 2014

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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Objects picked for "Early bird gets the worm"



"Early bird gets the worm"

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NAME

Amanda Scheutzow

Approved:

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Mary Hallam Pearce, Major Professor

Date:

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I collect objects to remember.  
I collect objects to preserve.  
I collect objects for their histories.  
I collect objects for my histories.  
I collect objects for discoveries.  
I collect objects because I am fascinated.  
I collect objects for their aesthetics.  
I collect objects because they serve as an escape.  
I collect objects because they make me useful.

I collect to tell stories.





Objects picked for "Early bird gets the worm"



"Early bird gets the worm"

## **-Artist Statement-**

What power does an object have?

Without us, nothing. Within our hands the object undergoes a transformation. They are imbued with purpose, meanings, and memories. They create the world we live in. I use them to create my own world to tell stories and to spark curiosity in others.

As a collector, the arranger of worlds, I take discarded objects sourced from the cluttered and dusty shelves of junk, antique and thrift shops and manipulate them to create grotesques: ominous but also darkly humorous monsters and creatures of elsewhere. My objects undergo a physical transformation. Manmade objects sourced from the cluttered and dusty shelves of junk, antique and thrift shops are combined with the natural bones and skulls of creatures past. These objects that would normally never live together have an opportunity for new life. The manmade and the natural are stitched together to create surprising and unexpected relationships; becoming a poetic whole, my creatures “Of Elsewhere.”

At the center of my work are photographs taken by me of fictitious landscapes that I have built. I capture these places using the process of tintype photography to enhance the mysterious and otherworldly quality they possess. The image captures light in a unique way and the chemicals create an ethereal feel to them. The finished tintype strips the colors of the original constructed scene, blending what my hands have manipulated

and what the original objects true forms were. The photos are meant to draw you into a world of primal archetypes where one can experience the physicality in the ethereal.

I work intuitively which allows the materials and imaginative creations to dictate the direction of the final image. My intention in making this work is to allow the creatures to take you on a journey that embraces the imagination that hungers for wonder. As otherworldly as they might appear one can find oneself within the spaces we are attracted to; the dark material that lies within us all. The images allow our visible and tangible world access to this invisible world I have created. The artificial natural world unlocks the power of the imagination and the spirit of curiosity. The photographs rebel against the rational. While the end piece is a visual expression of my inner fantasy world, viewers can also participate by constructing their own narratives built on the obscure clues within the image.

The images exist in a bizarre state of time. Both past and present exist within them, leaving the viewer disoriented and questioning when these were taken? When do they exist? It startles and disrupts expectations, leaving wonder in its place. The wonderful casts a spell, momentarily transporting viewers out of themselves and out of their confident knowledge of the workings of the world and puts them within these landscapes of the bizarre and wondrous.



## **What occupies the spaces of my world? Why I collect.**

We surround ourselves in this material world with objects. They tell us stories about the world and we in turn use them to tell our own stories. “Although what people collect might be different, the desire to collect is universal. People all over the world are inclined to this passion and it is impossible to list all the things they collect.”(Akhtar:33)

There is no object in my possession that I could not tell you why I have it or where it came from. I keep them safe; tucked away in little cubbies, on shelves, in boxes, hanging on walls and placed inside little boxes. I arrange and rearrange my objects in an effort to tell my life story and to create new stories to share.

Since I was a child objects have always fascinated me. I would poke around in drawers, closets, and jewelry boxes, anywhere I thought I could find something. Each object found, like an unpaired earring, old photographs, old books with notes in them, memorabilia, anything that created a new understanding of who that object belonged to and what they might be interested in. The objects we keep and surround ourselves with can tell more about a person than one would initially think. “...you can hardly avoid noticing the large number of things that are—or, shall we say, have become—part of our lives and inhabit all the nooks and crannies of our existence. Things play an important role in how we navigate the world, communicate with one another, connect with our pasts, and express desires. The emotional significance of physical objects is unmistakably evident all around us.”(Akhtar:17)

Objects made me feel connected and I was determined to solve their mysteries. One of my favorite pastimes when I was young before my family split up was going to

yard sales, thrift shops, and antique stores. Getting to look at whole new objects that were once apart of someone else's life but for some reason were abandoned fascinated me. Who did they belong to? Why did they not want them anymore? What was their life like? How does this object work? What are its secrets?

My very first collection of objects came from these thrift shop and yard sale excursions, Care Bears. I spent many Saturdays and Sundays scouring thrift stores and yard sales to find every single one of those bears and all of their memorabilia. Care Bears became part of my identity. I lived and breathed them. They were how I navigated my world. Of course after that came the first wave of the Pokemon craze and the emphases of "Gotta Catchem all" phrase. I was hooked and wanted to collect every one. Then came Cardcaptors, Sailor Moon, Harry Potter, ect. Most of my collections split between two different main categories the first was whatever pop culture craze what happening at the time. All I knew was that I enjoyed this thing and I needed all the things that go with this thing to make it complete, to make myself complete and to fit in. The second distinct section of my collection was objects from the past. My collections became a way to express my interests and who I was. They form my identity

I spent my childhood moving from place to place. I have lived in 5 different states and have been to a total of 13 different schools. As a result of all the moving, I was forced to narrow down my collections and pick and choose the parts that mattered the most to me. The ones that made the cut typically had a special memory or an event attached to them. They then no longer were just a hoard of objects I had been collecting but a group of objects that I could recall imprinted memories from. For me, one of the only things that was stable and unchanging was my collection of objects. Each new

school, each new town, each new state yielded new characters that entered and left my life. The only thing that was permanent and unchanging in my life were my objects that I kept near. My world was always changing; I used my objects, trinkets, and souvenirs as a way to create my own space. My own place to escape to. My own world.

Most consider objects to be purely useful or simply aesthetic, a way to decorate spaces. My objects have become my companions and my identity. They serve a purpose and are not just picked based on pure aesthetics. They bring together thoughts and emotions, memories and histories, curiosity and wonder, and an escape from the current world that surrounds me.

## **-The Creatures of Elsewhere –**

In what could be considered an extreme return to roots, this body of work is in fact that. My first undergraduate degree I attempted was in Media Arts and Animation. I always have had an appreciation for this craft and in particular; stop motion animation. I had to take a class on the history of animation and for that class we watched movies and short films everyday. Some of the films and shorts I connected with were by Willis Harold O'Brien; sculptor and animator of King Kong and The Lost World to name a few. His way of sculpting monsters and bringing them to life was absolutely fascinating. His style and breakthrough techniques at the time were unparalleled.

Jan Svankmajer's "Alice", a dark fantasy rendition of Louis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland", also resonated with me and still to this day. His ability to manipulate

found objects, like dolls, taxidermy, skulls, bones, socks, really any found object and give it life was fascinating and creative. One of the interesting aspects of this film is his use of character design. He does not try to mask what the characters are made of. For example, to create the caterpillar who sits on the mushroom he takes a long old grungy sock, sticks human denchers on it for the mouth and uses glass human eyes, he is not trying to mask what the different elements are that make up his creature. It is bizarre, unsettling, but darkly humors in the most delightful way. Unlike, how he manipulates his creatures I want to mask what were the objects true from and what my hands have manipulated. I want there to be a suspension of disbelief and to also cultivate that bizarre, unsettling, but darkly humorous aspect within my images.

Ladislav Starevich is another animator that has had a lasting impression on me. He is noted for making the first puppet-animated film. His specialty is animating real insects by replacing their legs with wires and turning them into his puppets to tell a story. “A cameraman’s revenge” was a cynical work about infidelity and jealousy among insects that have been humanized. This piece required the animating of the dead insects in these sets of a miniture human town. Little cars, houses, a saloon, all populated this short film.

All three of these animators all have left an impression on me with the way they thought about and manipulated their characters and brought them to life. Although my creatures are not animated (yet) they hold a similar aesthetic and look as if they could start moving, which adds to their believability and realness.



"Howlers"

All of my creatures start as a simple found object. They are generally sourced from the dusty selves of antique, thrift, or junk shops. I take great pleasure in the hunt. As I search through the shelves going from shop to shop sifting through the piles of objects, eventually an object will spark my imagination. It is the object that inspires the creature. A pair of brass pineapple tops become caps for a spikey snake creature with a skull head. A lotus pod gets taxidermy glass eyes placed into each hole. I never look for a specific object; I wait for the object to find me. This way of sourcing materials creates a sense of play wonder and lets my imagination come forward and be spontaneous.

I am interested in creating from death. Each creature I make includes a skulls and bones of creatures past or dried plant parts; these combined with the second hand objects with additions and alterations by me give the creature a new life. The object that inspired the creature is born again into my world. The creatures resonate with us because they are both within and external to our natural world. They haunt us because they are and are not animals. They are real but also imagined. They become a reimagining of the world of the dead. They exist in this between space, they exist in Of Elsewhere.

## **-Cabinet of Curiosities-**

The cabinet of curiosities is a nexus between science and art. The cabinets came into fashion during the Renaissance in Europe when people began to travel more and become curious of the world they lived in. They became the precursor to our modern day museums. It was not just a decorative display but was used as a genuine theater of learning and legends. The cabinets formed a harmonious arrangement that reflected a certain aesthetic of disorder. It is an unclosed structure that is open to infinite



rearrangement. Objects included in the cabinets were fixed and moving, significant and trivial. They lie somewhere between the infinitely small to the infinitely large. The collection has the power to constantly renew its existence through addition or removals. The collection is eternally turning. The collector is a singular individual who is connected to the temporal world by the thread of their habit. Objects that are selected are a mix between natural and artificial, nature and manmade. To place an object into the cabinet adds it to a vast network of meanings and narratives.(Davenne:Intro)

Cabinets of curiosity seek to reanimate the dreamlike power we can find in evoking the spirit of curiosity. It is a kind of return to origins. The viewer of this showcase of objects and culture can navigate the many forking paths of meaning to create their own narrative or fantasy. They offer alternate universes. A space to forget the real world we live in and to pass into the one they have imagined. They create a mental landscape, a frontier of the unknown. A threshold of a captivating world of uncharted places and infinite spaces is just waiting to be unveiled to the human spirit.

One particular fascinating aspect of the cabinet of curiosities is the inclusion of fictitious creatures. Roland Barthes said, “now the “marvel” or “monster” is essentially that which transgresses the separation of realms, mixes the animal and the vegetable, the animal and the human, it is excess. Since it changes the quality of things to which god has assigned a name it metamorphosis, which turns one order into another.” Creatures are mashed up and fabricated like they were rough drafts or creatures from faraway lands to be displayed and looked upon by the curious. This created the sense of wonder but as truth backed up by legends. For instance, the infamous Fiji “mermaid” made by P.T. Barnum; consisted of the torso and head of a juvenile monkey sewn onto the back half of

a fish. This particular creature sparked the thoughts that the legends and myths of mermaids were true because there was a “real” mermaid there for them to see. How do you argue with what you can physically see in front of your eyes?

## **-Taxidermy-**

I see my work as a combination between cabinets of curiosity and taxidermy. The mix of the manmade and the natural but shown as if it a real creature. I utilize some of the same traditional mechanisms that taxidermy does. Like the displays at The Natural History Museum I place my creatures in their “home.” The actors blur lines between truth, fiction, and fantasy. This allows the viewers to transport themselves into the fantasy or drama, even for just a moment. My creatures become a vehicle for the imagination. “There is a romance of danger, a uniqueness in strangeness. Far more than death and destruction, taxidermy always brings to light the desires, daydreams, and fantasies surrounding human relationships with and within the natural world.”(Poliquin) This feeling that taxidermy manifests is what I strive for in my work. Taxidermy creates visceral and imaginative reactions.

Taxidermy is a disorienting, unknowable thing. It is driven to capture animal beauty and is always a spectacle. It is always a gesture of remembrance, as the creature is no more. Taxidermy is motivated by the desire to tell ourselves stories about who we are, where we have been and about our journey within the larger social and natural world.

One of the main mechanisms that I’m drawn to with taxidermy is its use of creating a sense of wonder. Wonder is the initial step toward curiosity. It activates the raw power of the human imagination. There is an emphasis on a quest, an adventure.

The exploration of the unexpected has a taste for exotic locations with its reliance on magical natural objects shaping the world. Francesco Patrizi said, “12 Sources of wonder available to the poet: Ignorance, fable, novelty, paradox, augmentation, departure from the usual, extranatural, the divine, great utility, the very precise, the unexpected and the sudden.” To create wonder you must craft a mood, a feeling, and an aura. Taxidermy raises the specter of death. The specter is nevertheless painfully powerfully beautiful. Bodies that were devoid of life are reanimated again for us, and in far more vivid ways that any photograph or painting could do.

### **-The Gothic Imagination-**

Gothic writers placed imagination firmly at the heart of their work. I feel similarly with this body of work. The plots to their stories are characterized by involving supernatural, macabre elements, or both. These stories become alternate explanations of our reality. My work has this Gothic appeal not only in its initial appearance but also with the way the creatures are made. There is a sense of barbarity and of an untamed wilderness. There is presence in death and life. It is a reimagining of the world of the dead. The gothic imagination has a dark want for horrors and terrors, specters and sprites. It occupies a prominent place in contemporary western culture. Through the combining of terror and wonder, the viewer’s imagination is reeled in and becomes fascinated.

Monsters have always given shape to our inner fears and allowed us to contain them. Buried desires and collective taboos, monsters endure with mankind. The bizarre and grotesque lure the viewer’s curiosity in and create a wonderfully odd and

illuminating world. The morbid is transformed into something beautiful and is beautifully provocative. The gothic imagination re-imagines the world of the dead. The bones and second hand objects in my work speak to this in particular. This is their new life after death. They are haunting yet curious. Our own morbid curiosity surrounding death leads us to ultimately think of our own mortality.

### **-The Tintype-**

The center of the work is the photographs of the tableaux I create. It is important that the images I create have a mysterious and other worldly quality and feel to them. The tintype was the perfect method. Collodion has a uniqueness in the way it reacts with light. It records colors differently and is capable of a virtually grain-less resolution. The plates become handcrafted artifacts imbued with a sense of objectivity and are one of a kind.

Unlike photography from our current era of time where you can shoot 1000 images and then edit them to find the perfect shot, tintypes are shot one at a time and have to be immediately processed. They utilize the wet plate collodion technology. This fascinates me as well. It brings the hand back into photography. Instead of clicking a shutter button and printing it out and calling it done, the hand takes the image through all the steps and is a physical process. A perfect image takes time. A perfect image all depends on the hands executing the steps perfectly and each photograph takes up to 15 minutes for me to make. It can become a bewildering process. Two separate batches of

chemicals can be mixed on the same day and yield two completely different results. A silver bath that worked perfectly fine a few weeks ago may decide that it doesn't want to work a day later, seemingly without reason, but there is always a reason. There is always troubleshooting. The entire process from prepping the metal to applying the varnish is a heavily technical dependent process that sometimes can make success elusive, but when the planets align and everything works the results are extraordinary. This is an extreme difference compared to the immediate gratification that digital cameras offer. This slows down the process and every single step has to be thought out, intentional, and considered. This mirrors how I build the tableaux. It is a slow and tedious process that yields extremely high detail and craft.

What really strikes me is how this alternative photographic process transforms the tableaux. The sculpted creatures and fanciful sets are full of bright colors with some parts covered in sparkling glitter. When you see them in person they have a craft store explosion look to them. There is no suspension of disbelief. They are obviously fabricated and unreal. What the tintype process does is strip the images of their color in a very interesting way. Baby blues and greens become whites while reds, oranges, and yellows become dark and black. The glittery objects create a unique and whimsical texture and no longer resemble their crafty appearance. Everything blends into the scene and becomes a believable landscape. The image becomes a mental space, a place, which could possibly be real. A digital photograph doesn't do this, even if you were to make it a black and white image. There is just something magical that happens in the transformation of the tableau into the tintype.





Shooting these plates didn't come without a challenge. One of my biggest challenges was figuring out a lighting situation. This process reacts to UV light and the best source of this is the sun. Unfortunately, the sun was not an option. I needed to be able to control the light and have enough time to shoot the images I wanted. On top of that sculpting these sets took weeks and I could not set them up outside and hope it didn't rain or that it was windy during that time.

My first thought was back when I owned several reptiles. Their lights I used for them emitted UV rays for their bone health. I went off to the reptile shop and bought two bulbs and went back to experimenting. It became very clear, very fast that this was not going to be enough light. I wanted my images to be clear and have a good depth to field so I had to close my aperture down to F22 to get everything in focus. I purchased every light the store had to make my images work and discovered five was too many as the light was too bright and I lost shadows. My next inclination was to try black lights because they also emit UV but aren't as bright. These black lights acted as my UV fill. My end set up consisted of 2 black light tubes, 2 black lights in hot light stands, 2 blue reptile lights on clamp lamps, and one more blue reptile light that I would use to paint in where light wasn't reaching and help highlight areas that I wanted to pop. It was like dodging and burning, but in camera. This also added to each of the images uniqueness and made them one of a kind. Since I was light painting in highlights and dark areas with each image I took had small variations. Even with all of this light my exposures were still over 4 minutes long. The image quality and the ethereal atmosphere that I produced was absolutely worth it.



"Fancy Feast"



"Cat's Cradle"

## **-Journey through the lens-**

How can I get the viewer to have a spark of curiosity and wonder from viewing the work? How do I cultivate a visceral experience for the viewer?

There was only way to solve my quest was to experiment. “Fancy Feast” was the first pair of images in the series. I used this image again and again in an attempt to answer some of these questions before moving on to the next. My first attempt was to put the tintypes in a clear float frame. This option didn’t appeal to me because it felt very awkward to get in close to the image because the varnish on the image caused a glare and the glass also had a bright glare. There were too many layers of glare, which made it harder to see all of the details. Having the image in the frame separated the viewer from the image too much and made it rather hard for someone to step into the mental space and killed the suspension of disbelief.

My second inclination as a metalsmith was to put the image in a big ornamented piece of jewelry. I made a necklace with multi-layers and bright luscious red vitreous enamel applied to the top layer, high polished brass, and patinaed copper. It had a Victorian/Baroque motif to it and was quite a statement piece when worn. But alas, this did not answer my question either. The person wearing it couldn’t look at the image while wearing it, and if a second person were to come up to spend time with the image, it became an awkward interaction. Making this piece set in stone for me that it didn’t belong in jewelry and had no right to be jewelry at all. I would be lying if I said I wasn’t disappointed in this revelation, but there was no way around it. It didn’t fulfill my needs of my quest.



Large 24x24 tintype

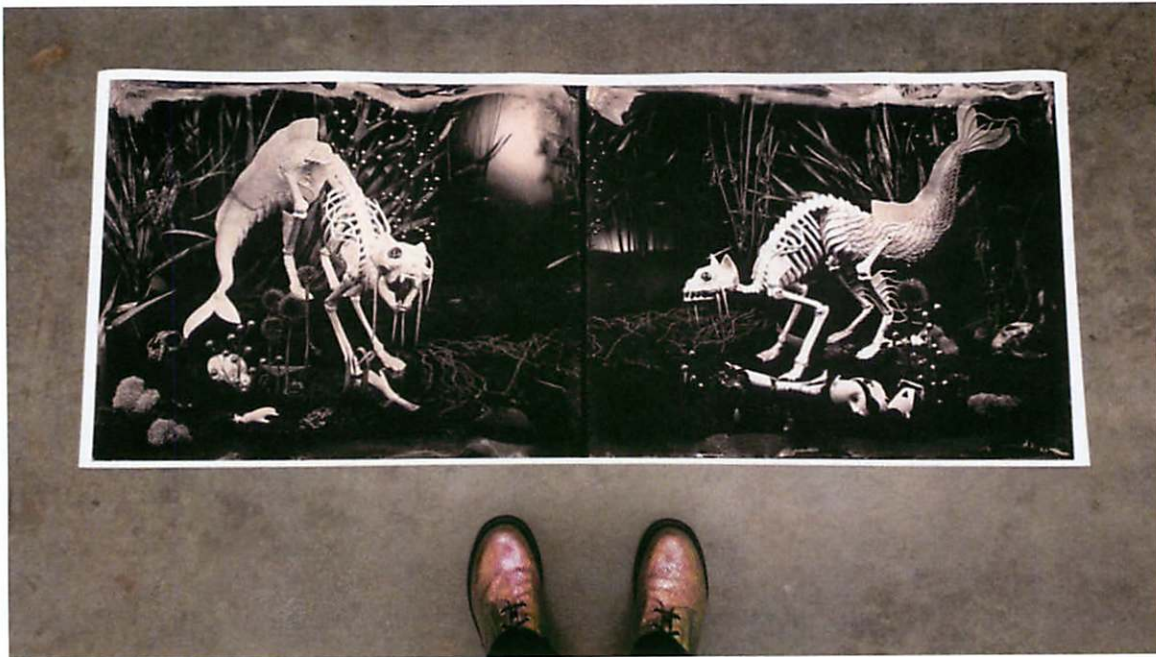


"Fancy Feast" with Color

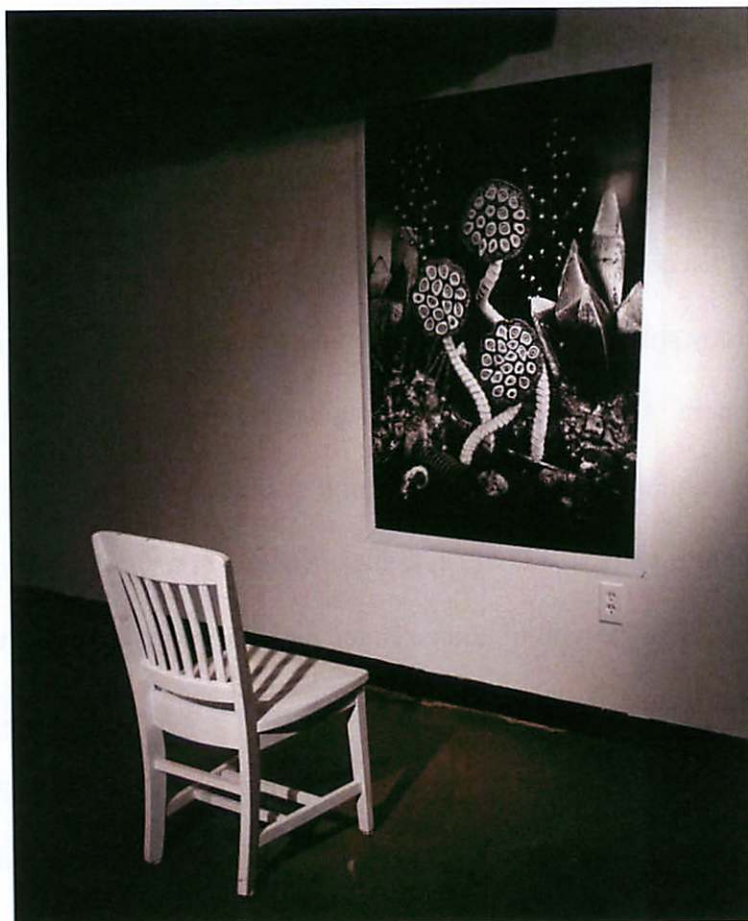
My next development occurred with scale. Thinking the images were too small I decided to blow them up. Maybe having the images larger than life and shifting the scale could allow my viewer easier access to the landscapes. More research and development presented itself as I was left to figure out how to make the largest tintype I could possibly make. The image ended up being a massive 24in by 24in. Unfortunately I have learned that the larger you go the technical problems escalate significantly faster. By going larger, I lost essential elements such as detail and crispness and gained a really odd fog over the image and the contrast was way too strong. My shadows were flat black with no dimension and my highlights were blown out. I discovered so much in the process but ultimately realized it wasn't worth the sacrifice of losing the details and the beautiful ethereal feel the tintypes possessed.

From there I decided to attempt to do half that size at 12in x 24in to see if I could get back to the image quality of the originals. Again using "Fancy Feast" as my image to experiment with I successfully managed to achieve quality images with the exacting details although they still didn't have the depth the smaller images that were made directly in the camera. For this experiment I decided I would try and paint them. Originally some antique tintypes would have pink or blue dye added to them to either accent a piece of clothing or to add blush to the cheeks. For a short time some were even completely painted. My weapon of choice ended up being watercolors. I used the actual colors that were in my sets (which, regrettably, was probably not the best choice). Although it was extremely satisfying when I was done painting the end result still wasn't quite enough. When I poured the varnish over it gave the colors life. It had a cool factor,





"Fancy Feast" Large Ink Jet Print



"Eyes of Vulture Mines" Large ink jet print



but it didn't really add anything or fulfill the answers to my questions. The end result also had the feel of velvet coloring books I used to do in the 90's.

My last attempt that semester was to scan the tintype in and print them out really large. I refused to give up on the images being displayed large and in charge. My thought process for this was that I couldn't get the image quality with making a large tintype, maybe I can still make them large and keep the image quality high as a digital print. My first print ended up being 4ft x 24ft. The print was extremely large, especially compared to the standard sized tintype I had made, and was printed on a matt paper. This solved some of my questions. One of the aspects I liked the most was that every little detail could be seen. I ended up also scanning in two more different tintypes I made, "Eyes of Vulture Mines" and "Early Bird" and made prints. The print of "The eyes of Vulture Mines" was a monster print at 48in x 80in. All three prints definitely had this "wow" factor but again I wasn't achieving what I wanted visually. The translation from small to big once again made for loss of information, but in a different way. There was a translation issue. To achieve capturing the details of the image I had to manipulate the images. If I printed them as a basic scan they came out muddy and lifeless. I had to change the contrast, remove color, and bring up the brightness. Then chemical stains looked odd and out of place so I had to remove them. They became practically a different photograph when I was done editing. The images lost their aura. No longer were they one of a kind objects, now they could become mass produced prints, which took away their uniqueness. The aura and ethereal feel was just killed. I knew then, inkjet prints were not an option for the final display of the work.



Front View



"Eyes of Vulture Mines" Inside view

From this point I moved in what would seem to have been a very logical, expected direction. I went through my own personal tintype collection and looked at the fancy antique cases that some of them were kept in. I decided to custom make one for the image “Eyes of Vulture Mines.” Unlike the antique versions that were mass-produced I decided to make a case that directly referred to the image within. This endeavor became my first attempt to incorporate wood and leather into my work. For the outside of the case I created a cave like space with a clusters of crystal structures found in the image out of the same clay I used to sculpt the creatures. On the interior of the case I embossed a design mimicking the creature on to black leather. The final touch was hand sawed out nickel that had a patina with a gunmetal color appearance in a standard Victorian vignette or border design. An exciting aspect of making this piece is that it brought the image back to becoming a handmade object again. One of the things I appreciate about tintypes is the tactility and object like feel. It brought in interaction and allowed the viewer to get closer to the image, by literally being able to hold the image in their hands and bring it up to their eyes. I loved the history these cases brought to the work. Traditionally the images that were placed inside them were images of loved ones and family. You could carry them around in your pocket or purse and take them out whenever you felt a longing to see them. With the case I built, it would allow the owner to carry around my world with them. All they would need to do is open it up and enter my world whenever they felt that longing.

However much I loved the interaction and the 1:1 viewing of the image, a new issue came to light. In the gallery this piece would be bound to a pedestal and wouldn’t be allowed to be touched. It would strip the case and photo from this interaction. This



"Howlers"

made it harder to view the image have that 1:1 experience and took away from the suspension of disbelief I wanted. The cases only did what I wanted when they were in your hand and unfortunately that's not possible in the gallery. I now had to add to my list of questions: "How do I deal with displaying in the gallery and still pull the viewer into my world?"

While on the Maymester trip to New York I got the pleasure of seeing a Degas exhibition at MOMA. What really got my gears turning was the way the museum decided to handle viewing methods for such small drawings on the walls. There were boxes of big magnifying glasses sprinkled throughout the exhibition. What this did was give the viewer a chance to really inspect and see the tiny details of a master and thus truly appreciate the art. The only thing that made me question this method was that it became a choice to pick up a magnifying glass and use it or just cruise on by the images quickly and not use one.

This made me think, "How can I eliminate that choice, create a viewing experience and slow the viewer down?" My next experiment explored this thought. I shot an image of "The Howlers" but much smaller than my standard size. The image ended up being about 1.5 inches wide. I then fabricated a metal viewing stand that mimicked the foliage within the image. This stand held the image up at an angle with a magnifying glass at the proper distance from the image. This would free up the viewer from having to carry a magnifying glass and all they would have to do is just look through. This also created a scientific feel that I found intriguing and also connected this idea of inspection, discovery, and a portal into the work. The way the image was mounted made the only real way to view the image was through the lens. As much as a





The Observation Deck



The Cabinet



step in the right direction this piece still was lacking something. It reminded me too much of a science display you'd see at a science museum, which I felt took away from the work and shifted the conversation.

My next experiment came in the form of noticing that my tintypes were always displayed on my desk with all of my objects I collect in the background. I was urged to experiment with combining these two ingredients together as a possible viewing solution. I called it my observation deck. I built a wooden shelf that suck out from the wall at a comfortable viewing angle and had the images displayed with magnifying glasses hovering over them. At the top of the shelf was a 3-inch strip of space for the objects to sit on. This really forced the viewer to get close the image and be able to inspect them and begin to be able to enter the mental landscapes I had created. I discovered a disparate connection to the objects and the images and the differences between the two became even more separated.

Starting on a smaller scale I attempted to integrate the tintypes into the same space of the objects. I found a smaller shadow box with various sized cubbies and had objects and one of my tintypes displayed together. Placing a tintype in with all of these curious objects put the tintypes on the same level of preciousness as the objects. I found this display strategy problematic. For me the images are the art. I have spent so much time and work into making them for me it felt like a disservice and a loss to place them within these spaces.

I was then challenged to make a large cabinet, like the cabinets of curiosities I am so fascinated by, and integrate them into it. It was wanted to mimic my packed studio



space and art practice of collecting all of my objects. I built it and no matter where I put the tintypes, the objects kept stealing the show. There were just too many objects (be it they were very interesting things!) and viewers would pass over the tintypes in favor of seeing all of the bric-o-brac of my collection. The viewing experience became overwhelming and chaotic. This way of display became more about the collection and less about the visual experience I wanted to cultivate. This was not what I wanted at all.

Then during one of my studio visits and after hearing what I was saying and what I wanted the images to do, a voice asks, “Why are you not making these into stereo-images?” They had noticed on one of my many shelves a stereoscope from the Victorian era. This had not crossed my mind at all, mainly because I didn’t know how to make a stereo-image. They then divulged the secret, “4 inches. You take a picture and move the camera over 4 inches and take another.”

I was a little skeptical at first because I didn’t think that the mechanics of it would be so simple, but, the second I got the second image taken and processed and I put both next to each other and placed them in my old antique stereoscope and saw my world become three dimensional, I was floored. This is exactly what I wanted. This is absolutely the way these images should not only just be viewed, but also experienced. The 3-D effect brought the image to life. The viewer was in many ways forced to keep looking and to look at everything in the image. It created the suspension of disbelief I have been seeking. The viewer was transported through the lenses and into my world. It created a spark of curiosity and wonder. What I also enjoyed about this method of viewing the images was that it gave a concentrated view of the work where everything



around the viewer was blocked. You could only see the photographs. This gave the viewer a peep show like scope and gave them a private concentrated gaze. I found the treasure of my quest. This method of viewing the images and problems and brought in a new layer of history and information.

**- So what is so special about the Stereoscope? -**

The stereoscope itself has a rich history. It was invented and became popular in the nineteenth-century. It used the idea of binocular vision to create a sense of depth from flat images. Two images were taken from slightly different angles and when viewed through the scope combined into one, which gave the viewer a three-dimensional effect, the illusion of depth. It was originally invented for scientific purposes, but was adopted by the Victorians as a parlor toy. It provided a powerful viewing experience in the home and encouraged viewers to be engaged in open-ended and imaginative fantasy narrative. The experience can be within a communal setting, but the act of viewing the images is private. There can only be one person looking through the viewer at a time. This allows the viewing conditions to be as concentrated and extended as the viewer wants. A trance or daydream might be attained when privately viewing a stereograph allowing the imaginations power of the viewer to draw them in.

**-The Magnifying Glass –**

I felt it to be important that there would be several different viewing experiences. I looked back to my experiments with the magnifying glasses and assessed what discoveries I had made with them. I found the magnifier did create a unique viewing experience as well. When viewed from a distance the image is distorted and masked. It

physically pulls the viewer in to see the image for its true form. This allowed the viewer to still have that concentrated viewing experience but in a slightly different format.

These are all the reasons that the stereoscope and the magnifiers became the perfect viewing apparatus for my images. I want my viewer to have an experience and I want the viewer to be able to be pulled into my world. Traditional photographs appear flat and lifeless while the stereo-image and magnified image appeared tangible and real. They both allowed the suspense of disbelief that I wanted when viewing my work. This world I created become real.

### **-Escapism-**

We consume our world through lenses everyday. Whither it is literal or conceptual. We look through them through our phones, mirrors, computer screens, windows, and televisions. They are all our constructed realities. They tell us stories, fact, fiction, lies, mysteries, and fantasy. We use them as a distraction and relief from unpleasant realities and the banal aspects of daily life. "Of Elsewhere" is my place to escape, however I don't see escapism as always a negative action. I see escapism as a way to serve as a refresh and to expand the imaginative powers. I also agree with J. R. R. Tolkien opinion of escapism. He argued for escapism in fantasy literature as the creative expression of reality within a Secondary (imaginative) world, (but also emphasized that they required an element of horror in them, if they were not to be 'mere escapism')(Nicolay:79). "Of Elsewhere" is a world where I have been inspired by objects from our reality that I use to create my fantasy. There are elements of beauty, horror, dark humor, and a sense of play. My creatures take your imagination on a journey full of danger, adventure, and discovery leaving wonder in its place.

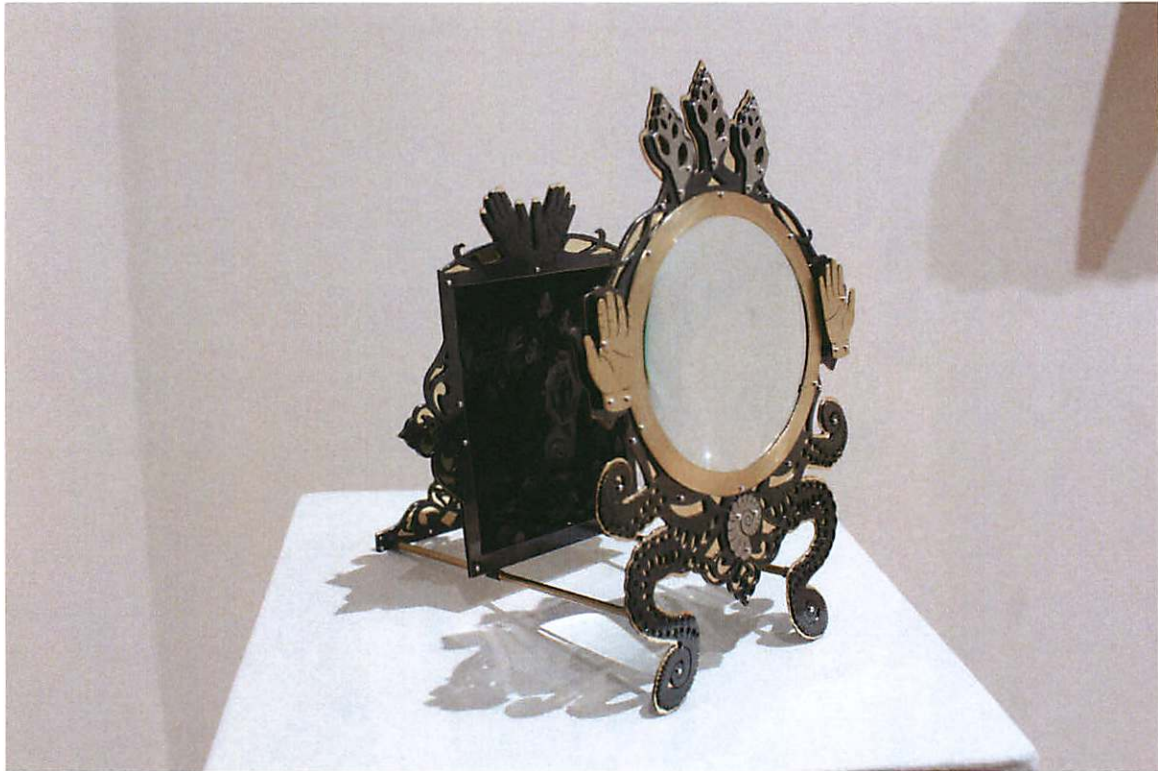
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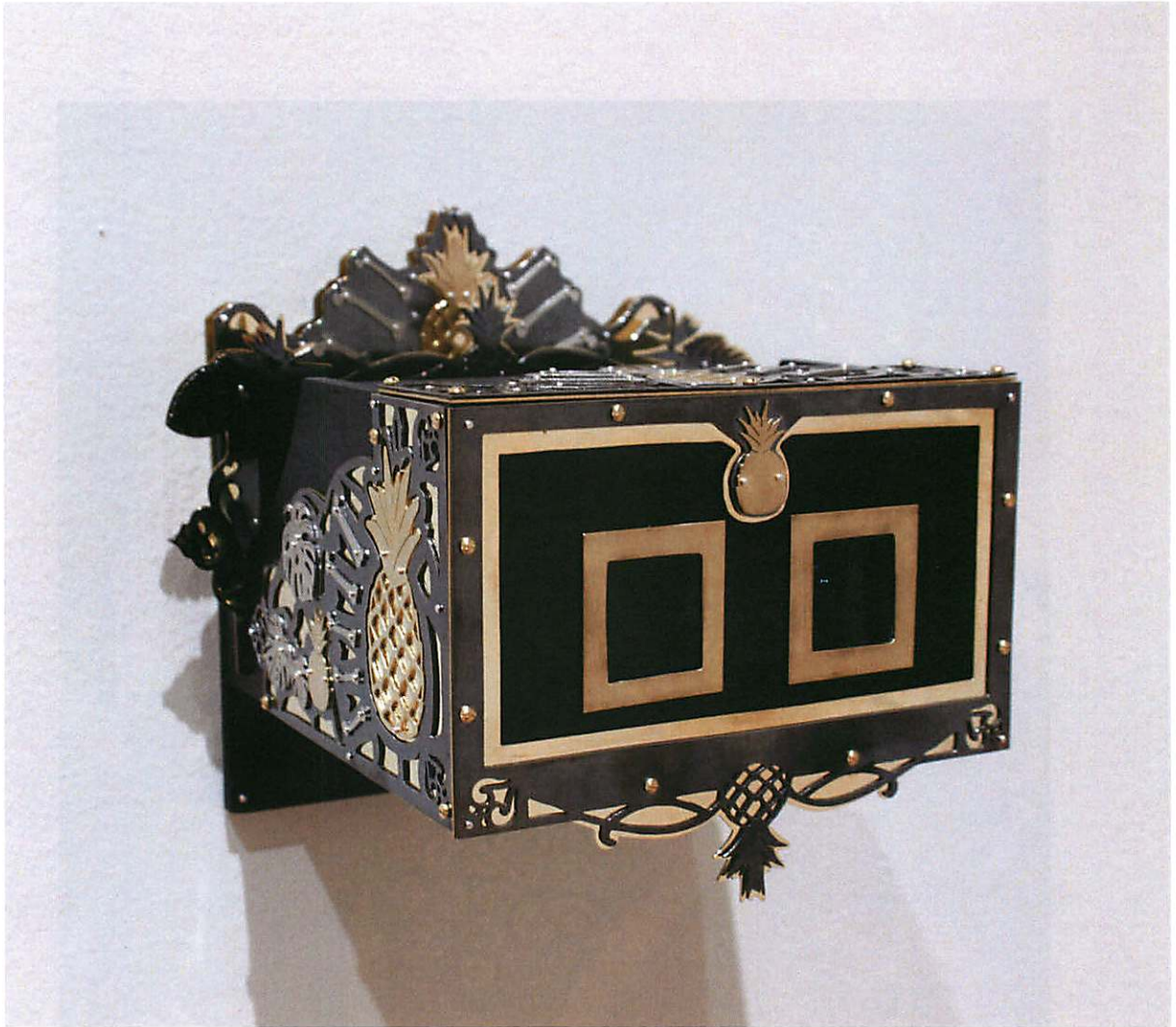
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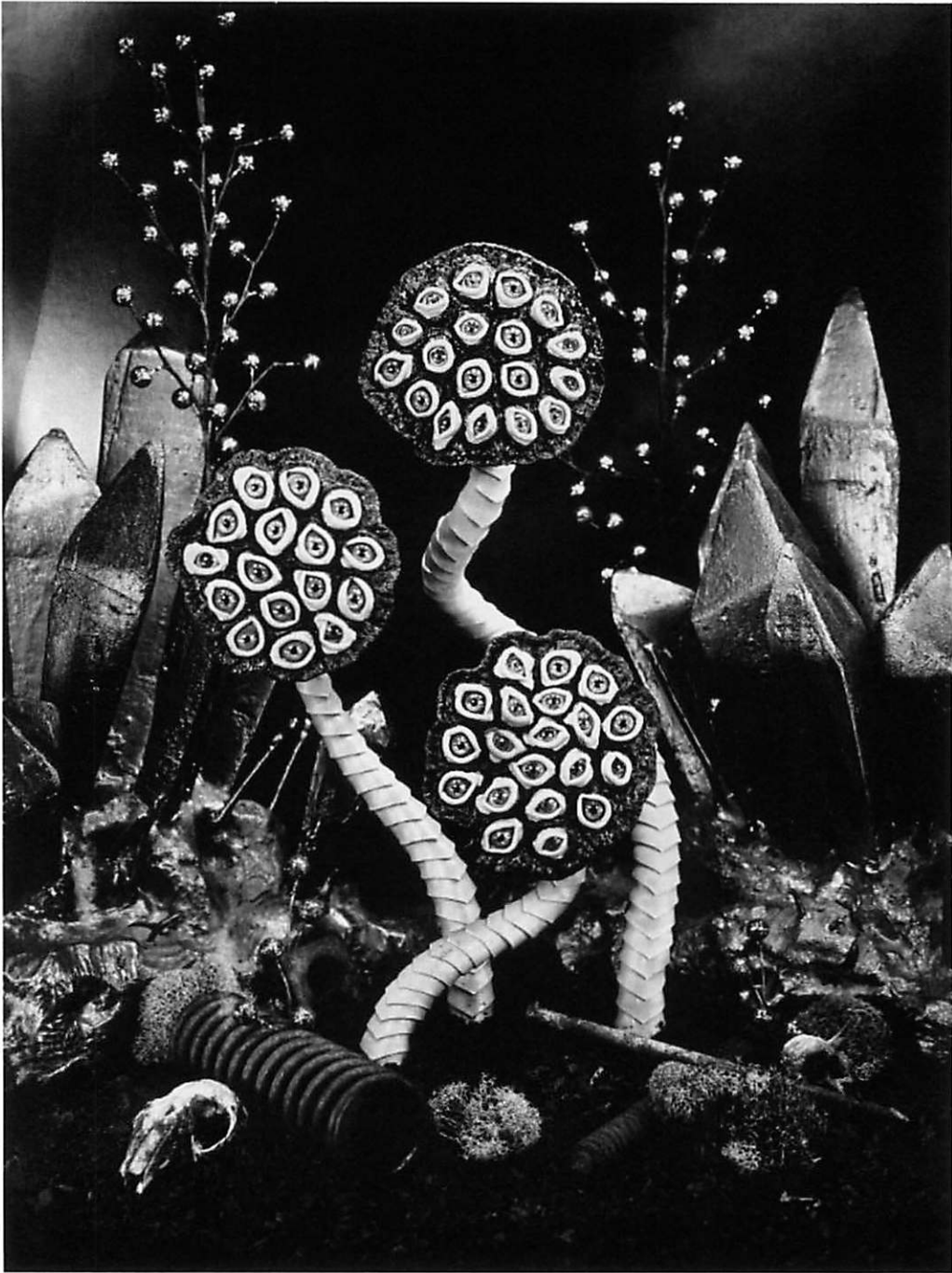




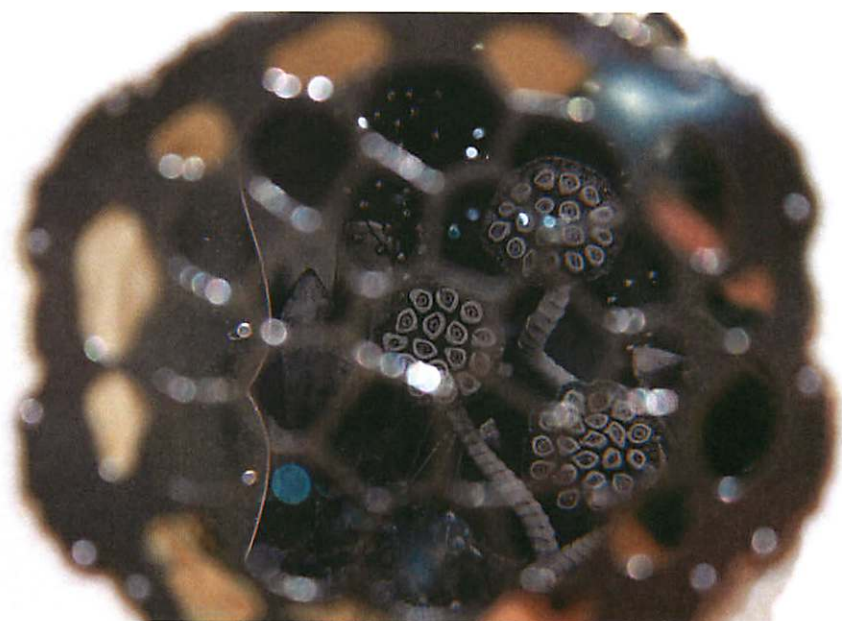
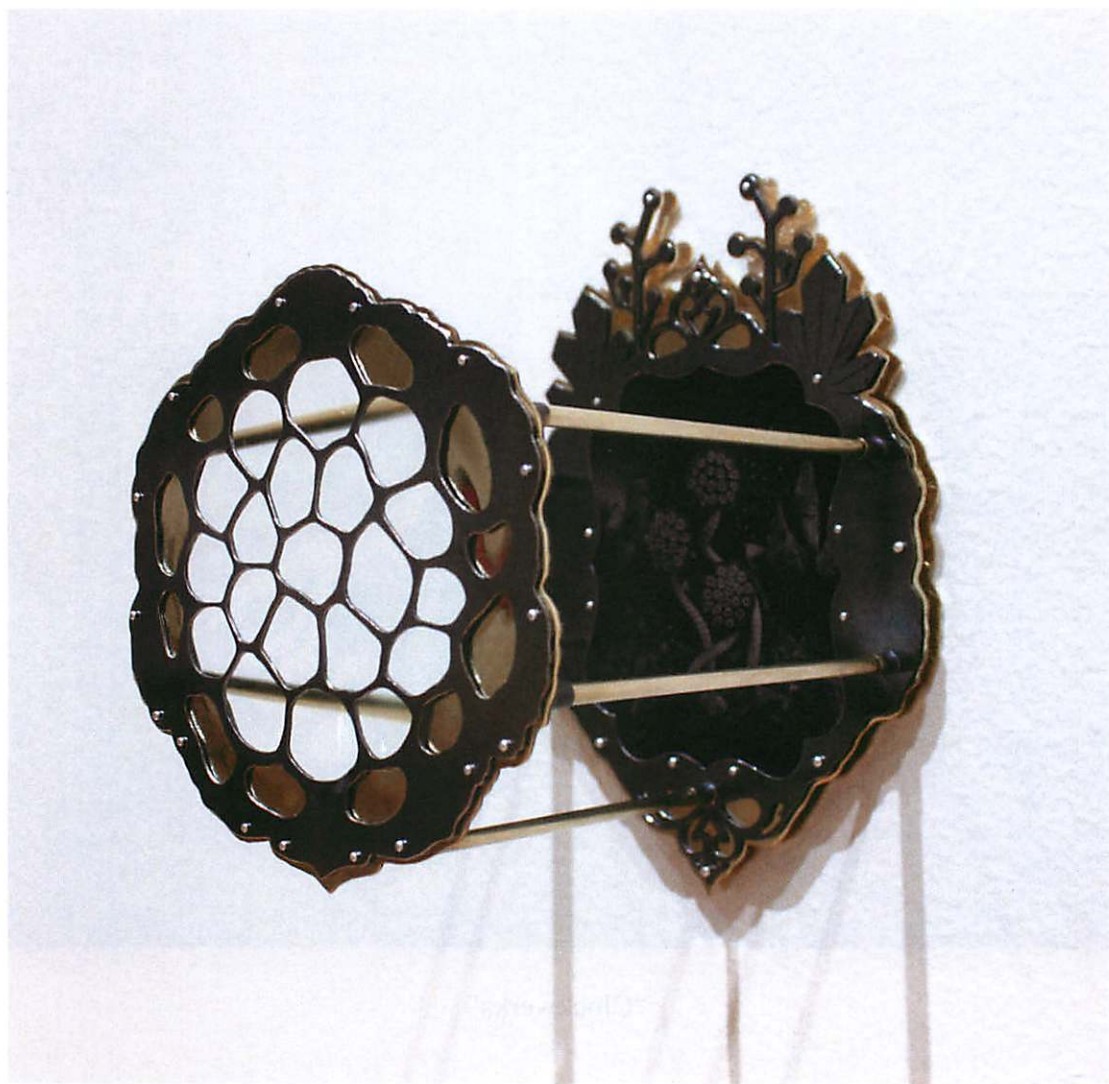
"Trouble in Paradise"







"The Eyes of Vulture Mines"







"Clockwerks"





"Howlers"



