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Artist's Statement

I am an interactive installation artist originally from New York City. My artwork is an attempt to create a world the viewer knows is fabricated yet allows them to respond to with empathy. My installations reflect alternative associations with what is considered natural. My imagery depicts the the natural world because it is a common language between the viewer and myself -- of expected, yet uncontrollable phenomenon. Feelings and interpretations are so heavily influenced by one's environment and, yet, completely disregarded by it. Conversely, in my installations, the viewer's actions directly influence environmental responses in an attempt to coerce a sincere reaction.

In my installations I consider the environment, animation, materials to encourage the viewer's relationship to the artwork. I build installations to activate the viewer and incite a candid and holistic response to the complex entirety of a multifaceted piece. I actuate my artwork through physical movement in an attempt to coerce a mutual emotional relationship between the viewer and the artwork. Finally, I consider the materials and processes in order to create imaginary worlds whose pointed meanings are believable within the context of the installation.

I began my artistic career as a photographer and received my Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography and imagery at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in New York City. Light itself became a significant factor in my work during the creation of *Night Lights*, an installation of light boxes for which both the imagery and presentation extended photographic techniques past the frame of the image and into the gallery. In a review of my exhibition at PLP gallery in New York City, the art critic Milton Fletcher attributed my light boxes to creating "pensive and evocative atmospheres" in his article *Layers of Meaning* for New York Arts Magazine. I expanded the concept of using light boxes to create imaginary spaces while working as an artist-in-residence at the General Store in rural Iowa. During my residency I completed *Insideouthouse*, a photographic installation of an enterable light box house designed to transport the viewer out of the gallery and into a solitary interior landscape. Upon entering a sculptural sketch of a house, the backlit images of the interior form walls that appear to be built out of distance, light and space. The viewer of *Insideouthouse* is provided with the sensation of being in a vast open space, while remaining in a small, enclosed room.

I began creating animated environments as a further attempt to engage the viewer in the artwork. *The Garden* is an interactive installation of paper-mache flowers that detect and respond to the viewer's movements using sensors, actuators and microcontrollers. Once the viewer gets within range of *The Garden*, flowers enclose their petals within their leaves, shaking nervously. If the viewer continues to approach, the flowers respond by becoming aggressive, snapping their petals and leaves open and shut. The viewer in turn reacts to the flowers. Realizing the impact they are having on their environment, the viewer will chose either to retreat or embrace confrontation. *The Garden* was exhibited at The Media Lounge, an interactive art exhibition in New York City, as well as at the critically acclaimed art and music festival, The Wassaic Project, on two occasions.

Brown-Paper-Bag Birds is an interactive installation created for Potion Art Collective's exhibition in the annual Bushwick Open Studios art and music festival in Brooklyn, New York. For *Brown-Paper-Bag Birds* I reassessed the material considerations of my sculptures. As a viewer approaches, the installation animates strips cut from brown paper bags. The movement of the fluttering paper is designed to recall both a flock of birds that take flight when disturbed, and paper bags floating in the wind. With this work, I began seeing materials not just as the physical means of art making, but also as an opportunity to reveal an inherent meaning in the artwork. While constructing subsequent artworks, I have continued to evaluate materialistic implications. The materials that compose *Spinner Dress* dictate both its form and meaning. *Spinner Dress* is an interactive spinning dress sculpture with analogue sound sensor gloves used to create an immersive movement-directed musical instrument. The dress is fashioned after the dresses worn by a cult group called Spinners who worshiped the Grateful Dead as a deity. The Spinners would attend Grateful Dead concerts, spinning around for the duration of the show in order to reach a state of enlightenment. The fabric used for *Spinner Dress* is constructed from woven Grateful Dead concert bootleg cassette tapes. Viewers touching the dress with gloves made from hacked Walkmen activate a sonic component of amplified nonlinear recordings. The fundamental mechanical design, historical materials, interplay of obsolete sound recording technology and use of directed movement reflect the cultural significance of commodified worship and the hypnotic power of combined sound and motion.

The Knowhere Machine was my first use of repurposed machinery where I built a bicycle-powered installation intended to produce the effect of a universal human experience outside of its associated environment. This piece reduces interactivity to a fundamentally mechanical design powered solely by the viewer and made from post-consumer materials. As the viewer peddles an immersive deconstructed bicycle sculpture, the cyclical rolls of minimalist scenery are propelled past, mimicking the experience of a solitary figure riding across the American landscape. The cheap imitation of an archetypical event alludes to the perverse nature of a supplemental hypnotic experience. *The Knowhere Machine* was exhibited at The Wassaic Project in New York and featured in an article by Steven Thrasher for the renowned Village Voice blog.

My consideration of environment, animation and materials has led me to create *Machinescape*, an installation comprised of post-consumer electronic equipment, reworked to animate components of an immersive satirical landscape. In this piece, discarded electronic devices have been stripped down to their mechanical systems, gaining new function as puppeteers used to animate sculptural interpretations of the earth's natural systems: water, land and sky. Since the completion of *Machinescape*, I have begun a new series of modular kinetic sculptures that change with the viewer's movements. My most recent work is *Imaginary Landscapes*, a series of Stereoscopic Viewmasters designed to disorient the viewer's visual perception of light, space and environmental relationships as a means of fabricating illusory milieus.

I believe it is important for artists to remain critical of their work throughout the entire creative process. As my artwork evolves, I want its production to remain in line with my philosophical, ethical and imaginative ideals. In building artworks with these critical design considerations --materials, method and message -- I am attempting to create installations that use human tendency toward empathic imagination.