No-Self, Impermanence and the Search for Freedom

Ahna Serendren
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No-Self, Impermanence and the Search for Freedom

by

Ahna Serendren

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I. No-Self

Anatta (no-self) is a central tenet of Buddhist teachings, and a theme that shows up in my artwork repeatedly, in different forms. The idea of anatta calls into question the existence of an enduring and distinct self, a self that is separate from others. The Buddha taught that clinging to anything (objects, thoughts, the body) as belonging to or defining one’s self would only lead to suffering. Since everything is constantly in flux and impermanent, if we grasp at the things of this world to form a fixed identity, we are likely to be disappointed or distraught when things naturally shift. Our sense of self crumbles or begins to fit poorly and encumber us, like a worn-out shoe.
Drawing from teachings on anatta, my work often delves into experiences commonly thought of as personal or part of one’s sense of self: early memories, pivotal moments in one’s development, trauma—things that leave a physical or psychic imprint. But rather than exploring these experiences solely in terms of how they have shaped my identity, I’m interested in using them as a point of departure, a way of exploring where things drop off, where the sense of “I” disappears or disintegrates into something unknown, a fertile and mysterious void.

When working with memory as a starting point for my art, I often begin from a known place, a shape, a vision, a color and then venture out from there, following clues, free associating, beating new paths through the bushes until eventually I end up in some nether-region, where the mind’s most intimate and peculiar creations reside. Paradoxically, to start from what I know (or think I know) often leads me into the strangest and most unfamiliar places.

In Elysian Blip, one of the paintings that I created for Paradise in Pieces, a recent installation, an early childhood memory prompts an exploration into the warped and fragmented landscapes of the mind, the places where memories lose their lucidity, leaving a tenuous or patchy sense of self. I remember lying with my mother in a field of nasturtiums. The bright sun is blinding, and the hovering, circular leaves of the nasturtium plants float like umbrellas around my head. No before or after exists in this impression—it is a blip on the horizon of the mind, a flash, a small island of imagery in an otherwise dark expanse of early memory.

In the painting based on this early recollection, the elements from the memory—chartreuse light shining through the nasturtium leaves, our bodies partially fragmented and hidden in the green, a horse grazing somewhere in the distance — images are broken up into pieces, scattered across a single plane, bobbing in the over-saturated chartreuse light. The fluorescent yellow-green color that permeates the painting is intentionally blinding, almost hard to look at. The deep red-brown, crimson-
black and coppery orange outlines of some of the leaf shapes seem to eat away at the surface of the painting like corrosion, pushing some fragments forward, creating recesses and fissures in the space.

The sense of scale in the piece is distorted—nasturtium leaves and stalks loom large while a tiny horse, like a primitive figure in a cave painting, is dwarfed by the other elements. Looping, dashed-off airbrush lines and brushy flurries of acrylic paint dart and hover in the space, as if some of the shapes are in the process of disassembling or coalescing. The sense of perspective is also skewed: are we looking down at a scene from above, as the flat, cellular shapes of the leaves would imply? Or are we looking at it from the side, as it would seem from examining the horse, or the fragmentary shape of a woman’s profile, outlined in blue-grey in the left-hand corner of the painting?

In *Elysian Blip*, I explore how a fleeting vision, stored within the mind, can open into unexplored territory, a chaotic, sketchy, shape-jumbled landscape where nothing is fixed or fully formed. This abstract realm feels closer to the truth about how memories exist in the mind—in fragments, in hazy patches or muddled by invented fictions. The more I probe memory, the more I realize how full of holes it is. This is where things get interesting. My motivation in returning to memories is not to revisit known places. Rather, by walking to the edge of recollection to see where everything falls away, where the solid and continuous sense of self drops off, I am forced to question how fixed or known my own identity truly is. I want to make art from this place, looking deeply into the spaces where I thought ‘I’ was, and instead finding something more unknown, more intimate.

To me, one of the most profound purposes of art is to draw us outside of our limited sense of self, to allow us to experience shared truths, aspects of our humanity that include but also move beyond personal circumstance. In his 1933 lecture "Play and Theory of the Duende," the poet Federico García Lorca employed the term *duende* (originally a goblin or magical creature in Iberian and Latin American folklore) as a means of describing the strong physical or emotional responses that can arise when making or experiencing a work of authentic art:
...In all Arab music, dance, song or elegy, the arrival of duende is greeted with vigorous cries of ‘Allah! Allah!’ so close to the ‘Olé!’ of the bullfight, and who knows whether they are not the same? And in all the songs of Southern Spain, the appearance of the duende is followed by sincere cries of: ‘Viva Dios!’ deep, human, tender cries of communication with God through the five senses...(Lorca).

I believe that this description of the experience of duende points toward a type of transcendence of self through art, a breaking open of the boundaries between self and other, so that something deeper and greater can enter one:

We have said that the duende loves the edge, the wound, and draws close to places where forms fuse in a yearning beyond visible expression.

...it’s impossible for it ever to repeat itself, and it’s important to underscore this. The duende never repeats itself, any more than the waves of the sea do in a storm (Lorca).

Just as anatta denotes an openness, a constantly shifting state of non-identification, so duende arises, according to Lorca, at the open places where things are not fully formed. Also like anatta, it has no fixed state, but is constantly shifting, manifesting differently each time it is expressed. But while anatta is described as an emptiness of self, duende is more like being filled, like a possession. For instance, Lorca spoke of Francisco Goya, “master of the greys, silvers and pinks of the finest English art,” who was possessed by duende to “paint with his knees and fists in terrible bitumen blacks...” (Lorca).

I believe that an experience of duende can be communicated through visual art, and that it springs from the same void, the same shifting, radiant space described in Buddhist teachings on anatta. As challenging as it is to describe or pin down (Lorca lassoed the great griffin of poetry to transport him through this wordless territory), duende is something that I search for in art—both in my own, and in the work of others—and a longing for this ineffable quality has led me to seek out works of art that emanate its mysterious power. Of course, what provokes an experience of this power in one person, may not do so for another. In fact, what arouses duende for one can inexplicably shift over time; works of art that once thundered one’s blood can fade in their impact, only to be replaced by others.

For me, a few works that have continued to sway me with their duende for many years are the seven individual wool warp weavings known as the Unicorn Tapestries (circa 1495 to 1505) at the
Cloisters in New York. Standing in the room that houses these tapestries is akin to a religious experience for me. Part of their impact comes from their scale: each tapestry measures twelve feet tall and up to fourteen feet wide (except for one, which is in fragments). To be surrounded by all of them is to be fully immersed in their world, to enter the story that unfolds within each tapestry, and in the imaginative gap between tapestries.

Because of their monumental scale and narrative sequencing, the *Unicorn Tapestries* require the viewer to move through space to experience them fully. The story they tell is timeless, utilizing the unicorn as a symbolic figure to explore themes that reach beyond the individual and into the mythic and archetypal. These weavings have inspired many interpretations, based on the various meanings of the unicorn in the Middle Ages: some see the unicorn as Christ, some as a symbol of immortality, wisdom,
love or even marriage. But, fundamentally, the tapestries elude any conclusive interpretation, and that is part of their continuing fascination.

Many contemporary works of art have also roused in me the spirit of duende. On the third floor of Chris Ofili’s 2015 New Museum retrospective, Night and Day, nine paintings hang in a room with lavender-grey walls. The room is dimly lit, its light reminiscent of the crepuscular hour just before nightfall. The paintings, rendered in deep shades of black and blue, contain the outlines of figures and landscapes just barely perceptible in the dusky light. As with the Unicorn Tapestries, one must slow down and acclimate to the space (in this case, adjusting one’s eyes to the lack of light) before the forms and stories embedded in the nine paintings can be perceived. These are stories of the blues, of blackness, of lynchings, of music, of police brutality, told allegorically through biblical imagery. The haunting narratives that unfold in this room require time to absorb, and come from a deep reservoir of human experience. In the presence of these paintings, one feels a pain both personal and
transpersonal, a type of human suffering and cruelty that, while conveyed through specific histories, somehow belongs to all of us.

Many of my recent works employ multifarious materials such as carpet, fake fur, felt or mounds of papier mâché, all buried beneath layers of paint. Figurative elements emerge out of the tactile surfaces built up on the canvases, sometimes taking shape through drawing or paint, sometimes through collage. Often, with these abstract-figurative works, the boundary between inside and outside the body blurs. In the painting Highland, Lowland, for example, a scrap of fake fur matted down with paint has an ambiguous triangular shape: it could be a shrub or a pubic bush. The outlines of netting, embedded in paint on the left side of the piece, could be a chain-link fence or a woman’s fishnet stockings. The white, squiggly-edged shape floating on the upper left of the painting resembles an
orifice, or perhaps a strange cloud. The long, bowing lines at center, made of a pipe cleaner and caulk, could be the stalks of plants, or tendrils of hair. And is that an eye, or a pool of water?

This intentional ambiguity in the abstract shapes that populate my paintings allows for a metaphorical merging of body and landscape. My intention is to disorient the viewer, to call into question the nature of the painted space, pointing toward larger questions about the nature of our selves as entities distinct and separate from the world around us. I ask myself: Am I not a sampling of land and sea—part bone, half water? Do my thrashing movements through this world not displace an entire cosmos of dust motes? Where do our bodies, our actions begin and end? In the world of my paintings, everything is combined, unified in an abstract miasma: warts and asteroids, sea coral and internal organs, frog legs and falling stars.

I’m also drawn to explore natural forms out of a sense of loss over the profound changes I’ve witnessed in Southern California’s ecology during my lifetime. In the 1990s, construction sites cropped up on stretches of barren hillside near the lagoons in my hometown, displacing many of the wild animals that had lived in the area’s open spaces. In our neighborhood, coyotes would sometimes appear on the lawn. Gaunt, undernourished, they came at dawn or dusk to hunt our neighborhood pets. Our cats launched their own predatory reign of terror, hunting smaller wildlife. In the spring, I awoke to the piercing shrieks of baby rabbits outside of my bedroom window, marking another score for the cats. With these regular alarms and clashes, I became increasingly aware of how our presence played a critical role in altering the ecosystem around us.

In reflecting upon the indivisible union between our bodies and the environment, the artist Jonathan McCree writes:

The distinctions that we make as humans between the contours of our ‘selves’ and the world, which we experience as being around and about us, are at best arbitrary and at worst an attempt or a desire to exclude ourselves; to prevent us from fully taking our place in the world. The larger struggle we are witnessing today is an ecological drama where the outcome rests not only upon our realisation that the natural physical environment is one and the same as our bodies, but also that nature itself is a form of mind (McCree).
What McCree articulates here is akin to *anatta*, a dissolution of the boundaries that we construct between ourselves and others, or between ourselves and the natural world. If nature is indivisible from our bodies, then our every act—however miniscule—has the potential for inconceivable impact. Change is not something that happens to us from outside, to which we are powerless. Rather, it is us.

II. Impermanence

If all things are impermanent (including the aggregate of sensations, memories and thoughts that we perceive to be a solid self), then what is the function of art? What is the purpose of ‘capturing’ or even commenting upon the fluid nature of experience? For me, another primary function of art is ritual. In the endlessly shifting experience of life, art marks pivotal passages, and holds up a mirror, asking us to confront the evanescence of our lives rather than collapsing into apathy, or becoming completely mired in the daily grind. Whether through objects that act as reliquaries, containing the condensed moments of presence and attention that went into their making, or through some type of performative action, art can function as a type of ritual, a way of drawing our attention toward the magic and wonder so easily lost in life’s constant coursing forward.

One ritual part of my art practice involves turning my own or other people’s refuse into something magical, otherly. Bits and pieces of mundane matter from my daily life sometimes end up entering the paintings or installations: old scraps of carpet, cotton balls, newspaper, cracked lines of caulk like the ones grown moldy between the tiles in our shower. On some level, it doesn’t matter what they are. Everything gets touched, baptized in paint, which is just dignified dirt and water, after all. The painting becomes a landscape of touch, the holy and ignoble folded together, buried in the same earth. Somehow, in this process of transmuting mundane matter into art, I feel connected to a greater cycle, to the ceaseless play of nature, always reinventing itself, shooting blossoms up out of the muck. The
paintings become a site of contemplation, a way for me to remember how one thing shifts into another, how identity is never fixed. They become a physical ledger of both internal and external change, a repository of the fleeting moments and mind states that went into their making.

I often depict the people and animals in my paintings as undergoing some type of physical or psychological change. I've always been fascinated by hybrid creatures, mutants, changelings. On some level I identify with them—creatures caught between worlds, experiencing a metamorphosis within their own bodies. At four I was diagnosed with esotropic strabismus, a condition in which one eye turns inward. In middle school my strabismus earned me a great deal of unfavorable attention. The eye would turn inward especially under duress, and taunting provocations from some of the boys in my class did
nothing but inflame the condition. I began to feel that I was in some way defective, that I had no control over my body’s mutiny.

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare used the term “moon calf” to describe Caliban, Prospero’s monstrous, deformed servant. The term’s usage today (“a foolish or simple-minded person”) has lost some of the complexity of its original meaning. I prefer the antiquated definition that comes from early European folk traditions and superstitions: Originally, a moon calf was the abortive fetus of a cow or other farm animal, but the term came to be used for any unusual creatures (human or animal), whose development was swayed by the sinister influences of the Moon.

Metamorphosis is a recurring theme for me, and a source of ongoing exploration in my artwork. Initially it was a way of thinking about my body’s mutinies and peculiarities and how little control we have when it comes to the physiognomy and personal character with which we are born.

Metamorphosis also became a way of understanding the transformations that we undergo during pivotal times in our psychological or spiritual development. As things shift in our lives—sometimes cataclysmically—how do we come to grips with these changes? How do we honor or grieve the passage?

Among the many authors and artists who have informed my thinking on this subject, Ovid and Hieronymus Bosch are the two that have most influenced my current work. I have also found inspiration in illuminated manuscripts like the medieval bestiaries. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (written circa 8 CE), beings undergo fantastical transmutation to mark psychological and spiritual shifts. For instance, when Phaethon burns to death, his sisters are so fraught by grief that they all turn into trees:

*A third sister who tore her hair clutched leaves;  
Another found her ankles sheathed in wood,  
another that her arms became long branches...  
As bark closed over their lips their tears still ran,  
Tears that were drops of amber in the sun* (Ovid, 41).

And then there is Nyctimene, who was changed into an owl for the “dark sin” of sharing her father’s bed:
And though she is all owl she still remembers
Her guilt, her lust, and in her darkness flies
From sight of men and from the light of day,
Exiled by all who rule the brilliant sky (Ovid, 49).

Hieronymous Bosch’s enigmatic triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (circa 1480-1505) has also served as a primary reference for my recent work. In this painting, Bosch invents myriad mutants, monsters and human beings captured in various spiritual or psychological transmutations and represented through his cryptic, symbolic visual language. In one central section of the “Hell” panel of the painting, a bird-headed creature with a blue reptilian body (and green urn shoes!) sits upon a throne-like latrine chair, eating human beings and excreting them out again, encased in a gelatinous blue substance. The human figure that the bird-creature is munching has black birds flying out of its bottom, as if possessed by some dark, scatological demon. Also in this scene, a black creature
with long, froggy fingers clutches the body of a woman with flowing, golden hair. Before them, an ovular, mirrored surface with a gilded frame rests upon a pair of green tree branch legs. The demon stares into the reflective surface with the woman (seemingly unconscious) beside him, creating a sort of fantastical, shadowy cameo, a marriage portrait from some sinister dream world.

In my own work, animals or animal/human hybrids often represent a transition from one state of consciousness to the next. One hybrid figure that has appeared repeatedly in my recent work has the head of a fish and the body of a woman. This fish-head character stems from an early experience, at age four, of seeing my father gutting fish on our driveway. Likely intending to normalize the experience for me, my father gave me a hose and instructed me to help wash the mess of fish innards down the driveway. Watching the hose water jettison the jeweled guts and dilute the brilliant color of the blood, I was both moved and horrified by the beauty of the scene, struck by a budding awareness that these beings had once been alive and that we were somehow responsible for their deaths. I was so distraught by this realization that I refused to eat any meat thereafter, and remain a vegetarian to this day. This was perhaps my first exposure to death, and my first experience of real empathy.

This formative experience served as a touchstone for my performance piece Of Guts and Glory, which took place on Pier 34 in Manhattan. The central figure in the performance has a woman’s body and a large fish head fashioned out of papier mâché, paint and mylar. The fish head is enormous, cartoonish in scale, its eyes wide, its lipstick-red mouth agape as if gasping for air.
Over the course of the performance two women dressed in black capture the fish-head in a net, leading it toward the end of the pier, and then gut it with a steak knife upon a white sheet. In penetrating the fish-head’s rotund belly, its assailants first release jets of purple and red water, then, rummaging through its innards, pull out fistfuls of deep blue and purple linguini, wet plastic bags and jiggling piles of Jell-O in various garish shades. As the fish-head’s body is broken open, we could be witnessing the violent goring of a chimera, or, conversely, a fantastical caesarian delivery. By confronting the viewer with the permeable (and impermanent) boundaries of the body, Of Guts and Glory explores how profound experiences like trauma, birth, death, deep empathy or even duende can break down the boundary between self and other, causing one’s sense of a distinct, separate self to be temporarily opened-up, or even dissolved.
III. Freedom

The great Indian mystic and teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti wrote: “To discover that nothing is permanent is of tremendous importance for only then is the mind free, then you can look, and in that there is great joy.” The practice of art, for me, is about a search for this kind of freedom of mind. As Krishnamurti articulates, once we face the truth of impermanence, we are freed up to see deeply, to be present as things naturally shift and flow (often in unexpected directions), without so much energy spent clinging to fixed ideas. I see art as a practice of this kind of presence and awareness, a space in which to watch my own mind vis-à-vis the development of a painting or other art form. The struggles that arise, the ways I meet myself, the places I get stuck, they are all critical parts of this process, a movement toward greater freedom of mind, which leads, ultimately, to a more expansive expression of art.

Much of my recent work utilizes the metaphor of paradise, or an earthly Eden, as a stand-in for a type of inner freedom. This paradise is a creative, fertile and expansive space, an inner wilderness that has not been bulldozed or overdeveloped by external ideas or constructs. In a recent installation entitled Paradise in Pieces, I explore the idea of this wilderness within while also drawing from memories of the landscape of my childhood in Southern California.

Paradise in Pieces spans most of the space in a room measuring 249 inches long, by 139 inches wide. The walls in the room are painted with a mural in shades of deep phthalo blue-green, extending up the wall to a height of 110 inches. Six paintings of varying sizes (all on stretched canvas or linen) hang upon the walls, over the mural. The underpainting of the mural consists of airbrushed shapes that riff upon some of the figures and abstract forms within the paintings, creating a visual dialogue, a back-and-forth between the wall painting and the paintings on canvas. Within the wall painting one can find ferns, kaffir lily plants, floating faces, swarms of eyes that are also leaves, and disembodied appendages (arms
and legs) that hover just under the surface of the washy, aquatic blue-green paint.

Each of the paintings that hang on the wall function as windows into intimate worlds within the greater context of the installation. In *Lost and Found*, the physical size of the canvas is small (18 X 24"), but the space inside it is dark, looming and filled with compositional contradictions. A figure with a fish head and human legs huddles, as if hiding, within a landscape of lush oil brushstrokes. The scene appears to be outdoors, but an incongruous glass lamp hangs from a chain at the top of the painting, illuminating a green pair of legs plunged into a black morass of space behind the fish-headed figure. The
long green leaves of a kaffir lily plant double as grotesque tongues, waving, intruding into the picture plane. In the right-hand corner one such tongue-plant licks at a red drop of paint/blood.

This world is at once inside and outside, a kind of phantasmagoria where seemingly incongruous elements exist together in one motley dream vision. A purple-blue shadow of what appears to be a human head emerges ominously from the top-right corner of the painting, as if towering over the fish-headed character. A tiny green-blue hand and an animal shape float just behind the neck of the shadow, as if passing through it, or strangling it. In *Lost and Found* the blurred line between interior and exterior landscapes creates a sense of dislocation, while the dramatic shifts in scale within the composition (the fish-headed figure vs. the shadow, for example) lends a sense of vulnerability in the face of an impending event. The dense, crowded composition of this painting creates a sense of constriction, of
being trapped. If freedom exists in this world, it is far away: only a hint of white in the upper left-hand corner of the painting indicates an opening out of this claustrophobic space.

The palette within these paintings is partly derived from the natural landscape of Southern California and partly perceptual, containing a kind of heightened, psychedelic vibrancy and artificiality. Coral, hot pink, sap green and neon chartreuse sit side by side with burnt umber, beige, deep brown-maroon and muted aquamarine. The paintings often employ myriad materials and methods of mark-making (from ballpoint pen scrawls to latticed reliefs of puffy paint, from aqueous acrylic washes to thick slabs of oil), creating surfaces that reflect the sensuous and shape-shifting forms within each painting’s landscape. I see myself in dialogue with contemporary artists like Shara Hughes, who also depicts fantastical landscapes and employs a farraginous mix of materials, lending a freedom and improvisational quality to her paint-handling.
In addition to diversity of paint handling and material exploration within my paintings, another aspect of the search for freedom in my practice is about trying to let go of my own limited ideas about what it means to make a painting, or a video, or an installation, and instead being open to creating a type of hybrid, a work of art that pulls from whatever media it needs to most freely convey its message. The idea of a "total work of art" (Gesamtkunstwerk) inspires my practice. In a review of the opera *Undine*, in 1814, the critic Carl Maria von Weber admired it as "an art work complete in and of itself, in which partial contributions of the related and collaborating arts blend together, disappear, and, in disappearing, somehow form a new world" (Imhoof, 42).

I have always been interested in creating new worlds through my art practice, worlds that operate according to their own topsy-turvy logic, requiring me (and the viewer) to see and think differently. I believe that the spaces we enter through art—whether physically, or visually—have the power to open us up into more expansive and liberated states of mind. When I was 18 years old, I took

*Shara Hughes, In Your Dreams, 2015. Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 40 X 36"*
my first trip abroad as an exchange student in Barcelona. There I was exposed to the wending, wonky, wildly colorful world of Gaudi’s *Parque Güell* and his mythic, towering *Sagrada Familia*. I also went to Dali’s house in Cadaqués, where a giant snake sculpture floated in the pool, and trees grew out of enormous coffee cup planters. Upon returning home to San Diego, I discovered another fantastical space of this ilk in Niki de Saint Phalle’s sculpture garden, *Queen Califia’s Magic Circle*. Wandering through the circular passageways of Saint Phalle’s space, one encounters gigantic, magical creatures constructed of cement, with colorful mosaicked exteriors.
Being immersed in such imaginative, outlandish environments felt native to me. These were
architectural spaces that made sense, worlds I could understand. Each of these spaces seemed to operate by its own rules, rather than according to the laws of efficiency and economy. In Dali’s house, for example, the labyrinthine interior twisted into a series of rooms on different levels connected by narrow corridors, some leading to dead ends. No two rooms were the same size or shape, or shared an entrance. To me, a space like this felt more representative of an interior logic; one could move through the house’s meandering passages or into its strange, hidden nooks as one would maneuver through one’s own mind. This transposition of the interior and exterior was made even more pronounced by radical shifts in scale within the environment: A giant pair of pink lips served as a poolside divan. An enormous white egg sat perched atop the roof.

In my recent work, digital space has become a natural place to invent and build new worlds. Photoshop and digital video editing software afford me the flexibility to rapidly distort scale, collage together disparate elements and dream up unusual color combinations. Sometimes I utilize these digital collages more like sketches, to inform future works. Other times they develop into more extensive video projects.

For example, in A Little Piece of Paradise, a recent video collage, I utilize multiple layers to piece together different memories, fantasies and found images, creating landscapes that are half-real, half-imagined, like the spaces in dreams. A Little Piece of Paradise draws from a multitude of sources: stock photos from golf resorts, stained glass depictions of Eden from gothic cathedrals, magazine spreads of Sports Illustrated models, and my own video footage taken from the San Diego Wild Animal Park, to name a few.

In one scene, a woman with a strawberry head (nod to Bosch) and a woman with the body of a Sports Illustrated swimsuit model and a fig-leaf head lounge on a patch of golf course greens while levitating sand pits and a whole Pangaea of other terrains float by, occasionally populated with other curious inhabitants. In this realm, elements that often represent paradise in our collective imagination
(such as beautiful, nude women, golf courses, religious depictions of Eden, notions of the ‘wild’ and ‘uncultivated,’ for instance) get remixed into a world that ends up being more absurd and disorienting than idyllic and free.

I believe that in making the invisible visible, in giving form to the inchoate and imaginary wonders of our minds, we act against the hierarchy of established order, we intersperse a bit of mutiny and magic in amidst the strip malls and office cubes, the linear thinking and gridded infrastructure of our daily lives. Whether through video, installation, painting, performance or some hybrid form, I believe in the power of constructing spaces where alternative laws reign—where serendipity, intuition and play create their labyrinths and castles, where the way to travel is not always the straight and narrow, the most efficient path. Wandering these corridors, creating them, I hope to learn how to move through the world with a greater sense of freedom, how to step outside the limited confines of self into a more expansive state of being, a space that is paradoxically empty and yet full of possibility.
Works Cited


Krishnamurti, Jiddu. *Freedom from the Known*. J.Krishnamurti online:


McCree, Jonathan. Statement for “Drawing On Nature” Exhibition at Museo Craveri, 2013:


## Exhibition Image List

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Exhibition Installation Images