



PENINSULA ART SPACE

352 Van Brunt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231
Thurs-Sun: Noon-7pm

T: (917) 399-5221
info@peninsulaartspace.com
www.peninsulaartspace.com

Samuel Payne
Final Lap

May 17 – June 15, 2014



Installation view: Samuel Payne, *final lap*, Peninsula Art Space, Brooklyn, NY, 2014



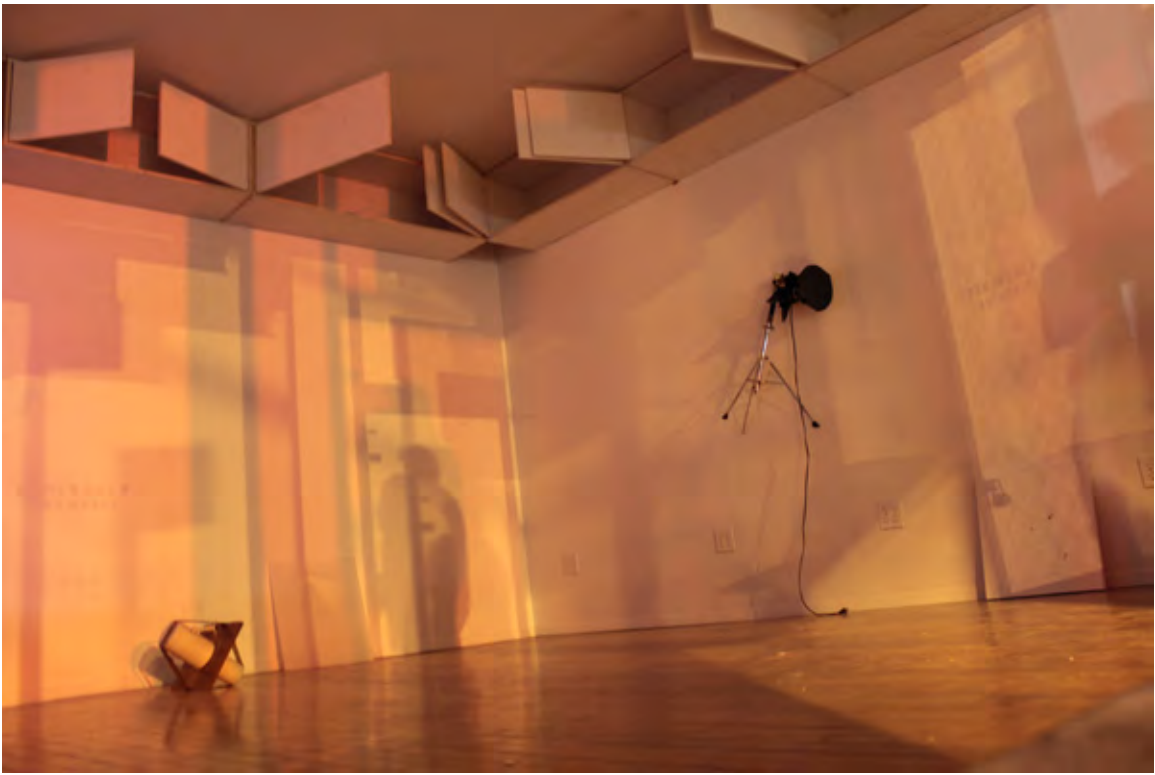
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Samuel Payne
10 Empty Cabinets (A-J) (detail)
2014
Miscellaneous plywood
Dimensions variable



Samuel Payne
Suffocated Light (Clarity = Proximity)
2014
Cymbale stand, garbage bag, duct tape, string
36 x 21 x 16 inches



Samuel Payne

Upturned Hat, Cast Dice

2014

Felt hat, four red dice

12 x 12 x 6 inches



Samuel Payne

Dragging the Periphery (Displacement = Value): Montana, Wyoming, New York, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Idaho

2014

Video; Plastic, bolt, wood, amplifier, TV, cables

Video: 6 minute loop; Installation: 16 x 19 x 16 inches

Video: Edition of 3 + 1AP; Installation: Unique



Samuel Payne

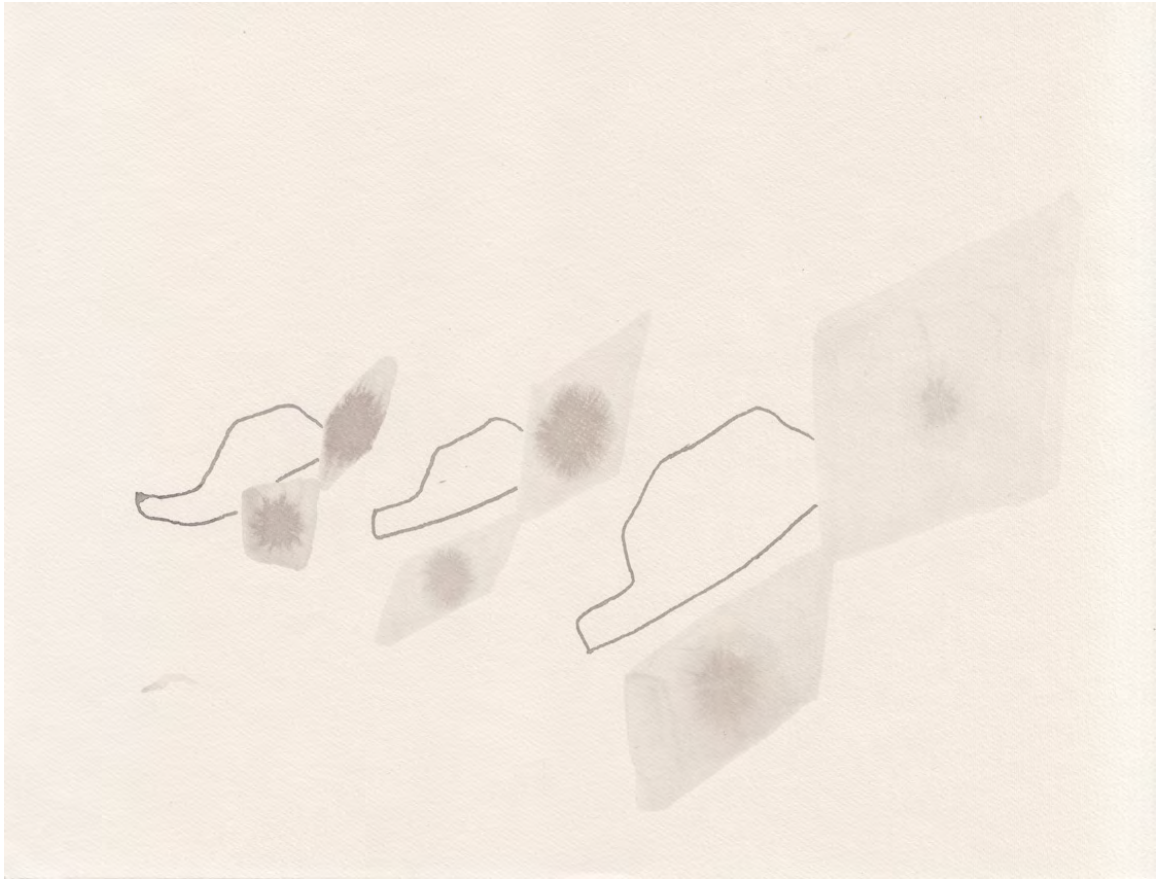
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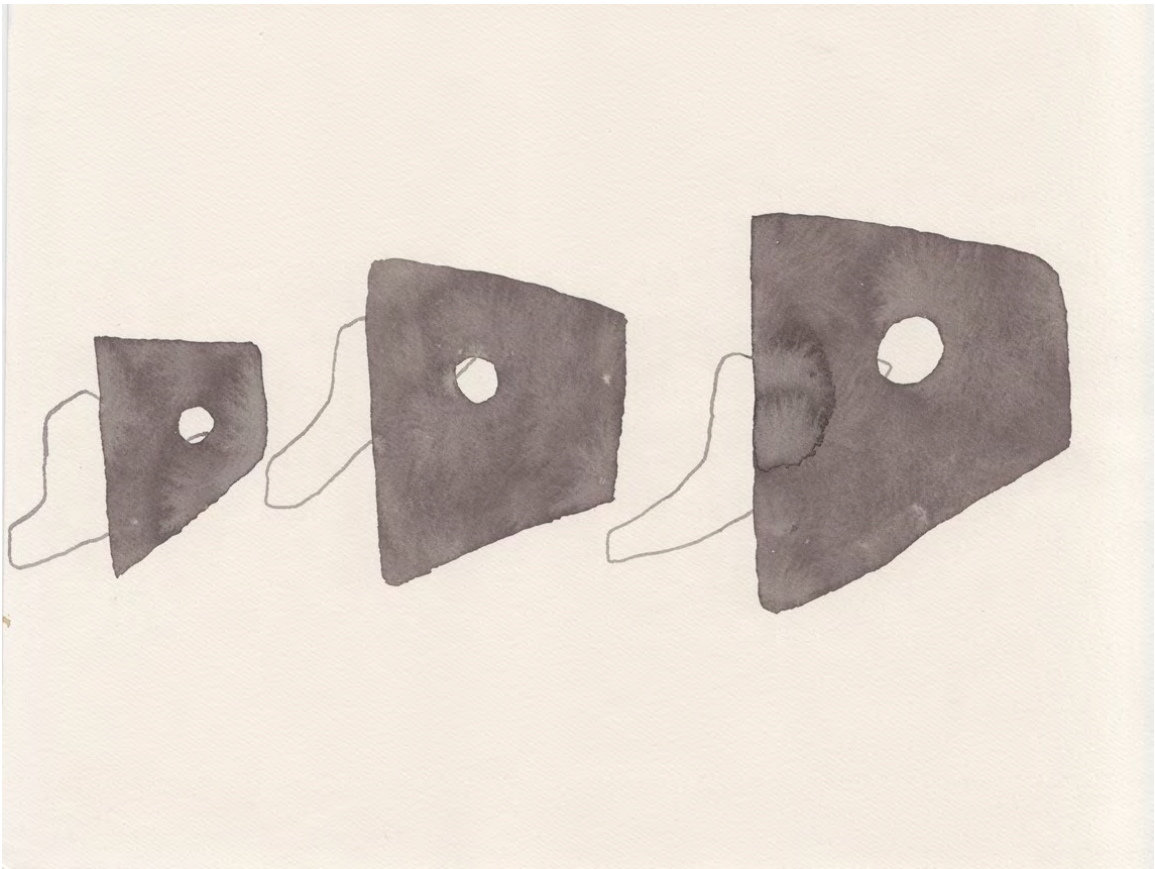
2014

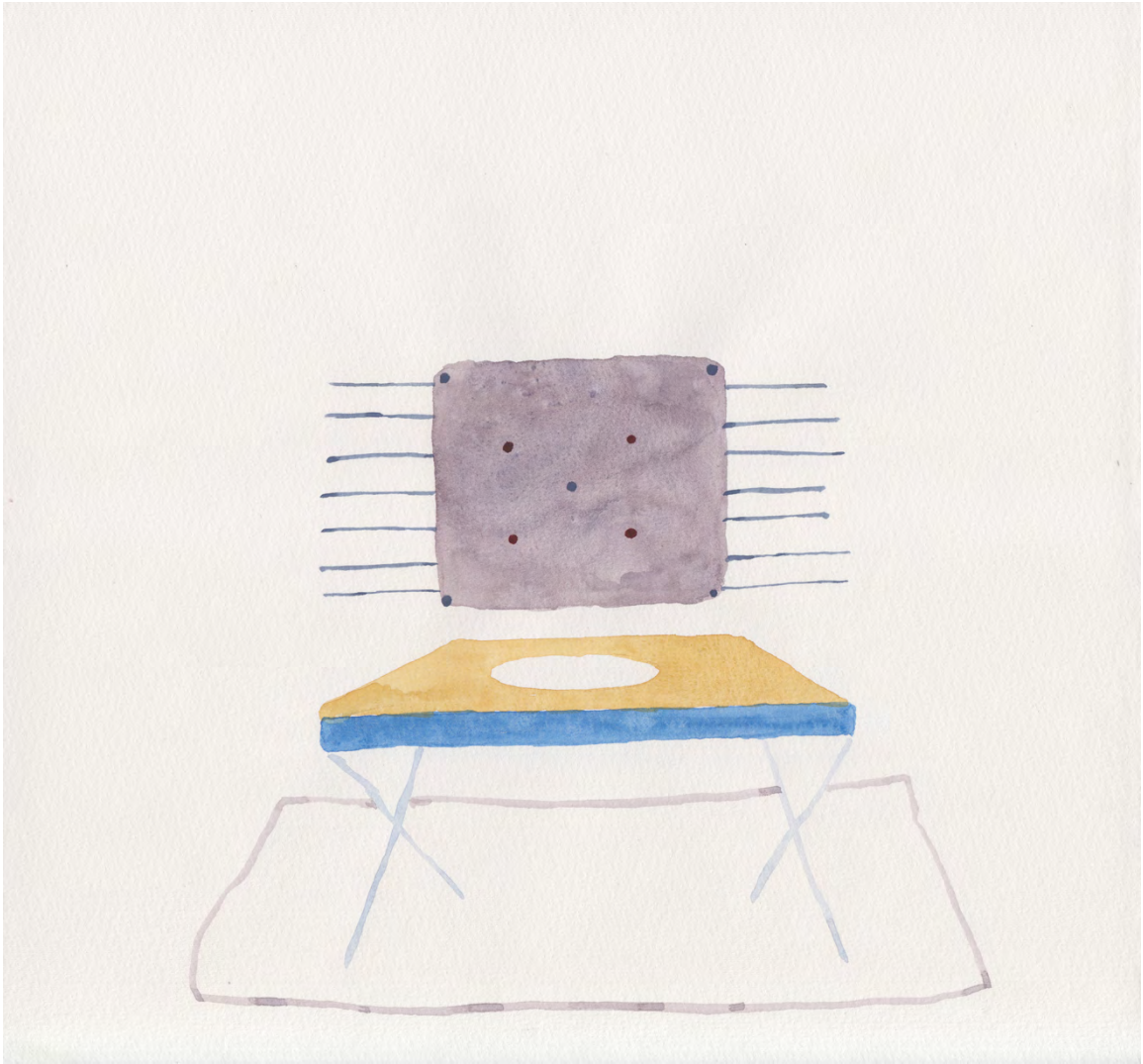
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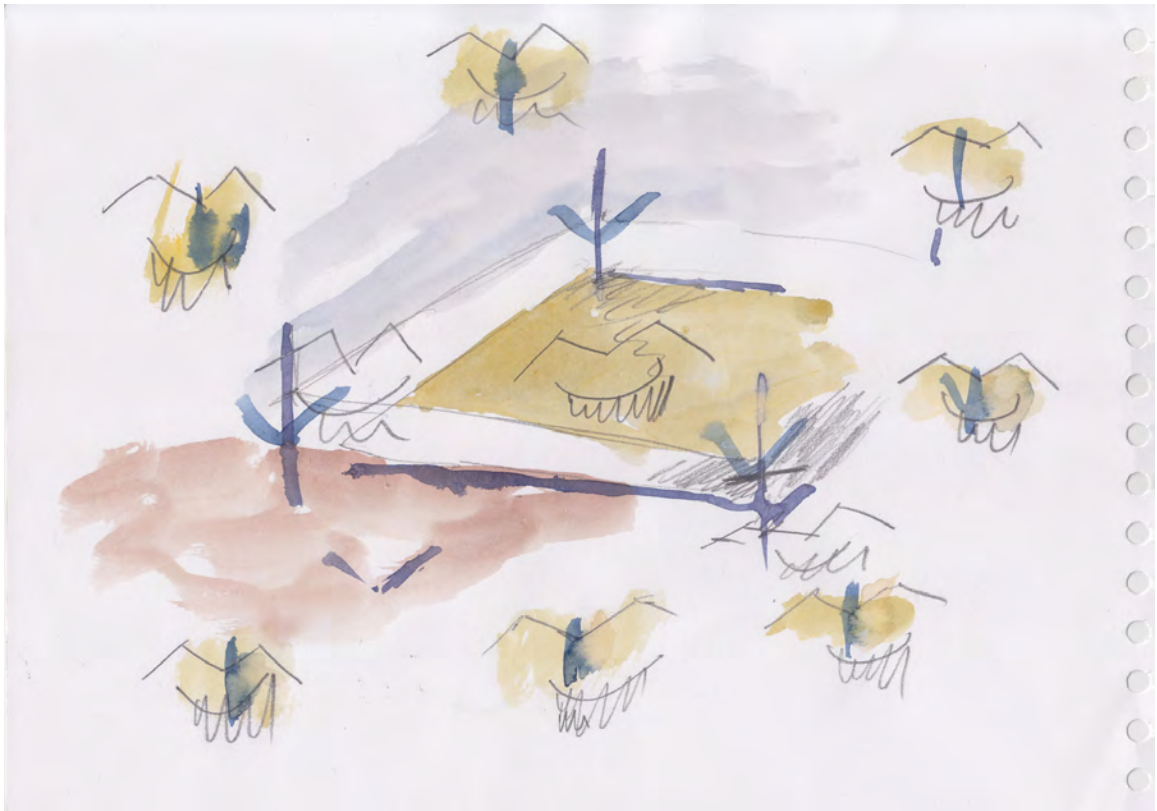
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Sam Payne

final lap

May 8 – June 15, 2014

Opening: May 17, 7-10pm

Objects, contained: objects are things (begin to have use) by virtue of the suggestion of storage (where things go). Categories, containers: Empty containers imply what they contain – are not empty; instead, are physical spaces for assembling imagined objects and sounds (e.g.: painting the idea of a body, not a body / the opening of a door that is already open, swings out, pivots).

1.

If I begin with the cabinets and trace their etymology to the advent of the *cabinet* in 16th century France, I'm in a small, private, personal room. Soon the room becomes a placeholder for the things inside of it, a repository for treasures or objects of some kind – they call for silence, sunlight. From this architectural frame, the cabinet is reformulated to denote a piece of furniture. Dis-identification of the subject inside the cabinet is wrung inside out, reversed, and repurposed. *Cabinet* comes to encompass a meaning inside of itself –is transferred to the objects contained, the subject outside.

The subject is outside and there are no objects inside. The subject is displaced from the interior. Now the subject reaches toward the cabinet. The cabinet is quite high up on the wall. It appears to be within arm's reach – suspended at arm's length. Its proximity is teasing, but also teases out a space – a clearing, an opening. There are many cabinets and the cabinet doors are swung open at different angles, revealing a rhythmical, repetitious emptiness that surrounds the room (gallery). The gallery walls are white, but open doors cast shadows stark as the sun shines through, hold time in their place. I crane my head slightly, bow it slightly. The cabinets are high up and if I spin around to see them all in one swirl, the panorama is dizzying. When I stop spinning the cabinets are still there, the room is still here, I've held my arms up, I've been having some kind of epiphanic (transcending) dream: objects making their way through the room, inside of my head, outside in the world, back onto themselves. I've held myself at arm's length, holding my self and looked at my shadow, witnessed consciousness forming. The subject position (formation) is somewhere in the middle. The middle is the teased-out space, the opening.

2.

Darwinian cabinets – unlike cabinets of curiosities (systematically boundless, with characteristically uncategorizable contents) -- are categorically organized. Each thing in its right place, each thing evolved to refer back to its place: labeled, stored, retrievable. Cabinet drawers pull out to reveal a world where classification signals progressive evolution, itself proof of a displacement through successive changes and substitutions. Evolutionary and retrogressive movements pull apart the fabric of space. Value rises just as buoyant or sinking bodies in water is a material substrate: it tells us something about the equality or difference of the object and its surrounding material. The displaced gain distance and come to occupy other spaces (shadows).

The periphery is pulled into the center, snapped into inchoate place by a song. The dimension of the song is the shape the song makes when it enters the room, how it moves through the center of the framework, and is drawn to its threshold to lie in the door that swings, casting a shadow: that is how it is heard. The multiplicity in the center makes it as liminal a space as the doorframe. The peripheral center is where coexistence means



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circling back onto the self to end up outside of it or its workable framework, instead framed from the back, stacked inside and out like Russian dolls.

3.

“Form does not necessarily achieve closure, nor does raw materiality provide openness. Indeed, the conjunction of form with radical *openness* may be what can offer a version of the “paradise” for which writing often yearns—a flowering focus on a distinct infinity.” (Lyn Hejinian, “The Rejection of Closure,” 1985)

The work doesn’t prescribe a closed reading; its radical openness surveys an impasse, migrates within it, from proposition to proposition, causing a revealing displacement akin to Archimedes’s principle. The formal aporia remains willfully unresolved. The work rises to reach a stopping point. Cabinets and objects point outside of themselves and mirror each other in this point, peripatetically arriving at it from different paths. At this stopping point, their refusal of closure is maximal; relative to one another, refusal reverberates. Reverberation, unlike causation, is a trickling, rhythmic, excitatory mode. Coupled with the intentional object, which incites consciousness of itself (be it physical or imaginary), this reverberation opens up what Gaston Bachelard has termed “a threshold of being,” or a middle, a clearing. In the clearing, the work signals a drop: *falling flat* as a strategy of being.

4.

Tomorrow might not come, so the chess player sacrifices his queen in a swift and radical rupture of the course of the game – *opens it up*, collapses potentiality and actuality. In a game where strategy equals a linear course, ie: each move entails the next to reach *the end*, like each note within a song disclosing its intrinsic, necessary successor in the interest of the sequence constituting a *whole*, the sacrifice of the queen is a note that rings off, that creates an off-course that *is not off-course*. The pacing of each thing in relation to the other (not necessarily to the next) is upended, even as the rhythm between things feels *relational*, which is to say, establishes trust, care. Formal, final cohesion is withheld yet there is the evocation of a final pushing forward, followed by gyroscopic returns, rather than linear conclusions or movement within a closed circuit. Incomplete cycles are worth paying attention to, like the multi-generational migration of Monarchs, many of whom never reach their destination: the migratory course is a life, the life is open to its end. When the form of a thing implies a radically open, yet in some way, uncommunicative end (the game of chess is lost), the thing continues to move outside of itself, arriving somewhere that subjective structures had not foreseen.

Decoys and distractions suspend the work at the threshold: “one stays in it, one holds on longer.” *In it* is also everywhere that is *not in it* (“not from not / but in in.” – Creeley): negative and positive spaces, recursive mirrors. The relation of parts to each other and the relation of parts to a reticent whole suggest an unfixed position on a projection plane which hovers between the distant and the proximate. In this, the work moves through decoys and distractions, favoring a multiplicity of positions and a difficulty in difference, that invites a process of breaking apart & a process of reconstructing and re-membering.

5.

Samuel Payne (b. 1982, New York City), lives and works in Brooklyn. He earned his MFA in painting at the University of Washington in Seattle, and his BA at Hampshire College in Massachusetts. An album and artist book related to his two-year long cabinet project are forthcoming.



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NY ARTS

Night Bloom: New Work by Samuel Payne



Samuel Payne, final lap, installation view, 2014. Image courtesy of Peninsula Art Space.

There are a number of people making work right now that aptly dig holes into what a sculpture or installation can be, purposefully pointing fingers at the ways we encounter art in the round. I am thinking specifically about a show by Daniel Turner that is coming to an end at Team Gallery, an experience that just opened at Robert Blumenthal by Luke Diiorio, and an installation by Samuel Payne that is a little over half way through it's duration at Peninsula Art Space in Redhook. It's the work of this last artist that I think embodies the essence of what I find most relevant within this genre of recent art.

As you enter the space, the first thing you likely become aware of is 270 degrees of cabinet, hang half open all the way around the three available sides of the gallery. They are desperate to be touched, doors all ajar. Yet, as they are hung tight to the ceiling, they are definitely out of reach. To your left, a fedora lies abandoned, upside down, holding a set of gambling dice. It references the absence of the artist as much as it entices the viewer to take a chance in staying a minute or two to absorb the work.

Straight ahead, a small amp feeds music from a song playing off of a video in the back room. It leans menacingly at an acute angle from the floor facing a simple paper snowflake, which is choked between two layers of suffocating plastic wrapped over what appears to be a modest set of stretcher bars.

A clamp light on a cymbal stand is hung and left for dead on the right wall, face removed of it's utility by a heavy wrapping of black plastic. It hangs perilously close to the plug that can give it life, yet is helpless to plug itself in, cord lying limply against the ground in solemn defeat. This piece perhaps most obviously states the artist's intention of removing the useful nature of a given object in order to imbue it with a new purpose that is divorced from the original use of the thing we comprehend.



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In the back room, a floor installed TV plays a series of video clips recorded by the artist on a trip across the US. Each segment shows Payne hiding behind a series of plein air landscape paintings. He plays the soundtrack to the exhibition on his acoustic guitar, sliding behind the easel that faces the viewer to play his song before sneaking away upon its conclusion without ever showing his face to the camera. These songs slink throughout the airspace intermittently, becoming the cyclical soundtrack of the exhibition, which build and wane with each passing of a song dedicated to a very specific vista encountered in the artist's journeys.

One of the most startlingly beautiful aspects of this work is the artist's attention to local light and the passing of natural time. As the sun goes down, the lights of the neighborhood bleed in through the glass front windows. We become silhouettes on the back wall; flowing reds, greens, and grays making the cabinets shift and slowly move around us like imagined planes in an abstract painting. They also serve to show ourselves to ourselves, as we are active observers whose likenesses are projected throughout the space.

As an ambulance goes by our reality is kicked into an excited frenzy, colored fragments of light dancing frenetically throughout the space. It reveals the exhibition as a multifaceted camera obscura, reflecting the interior experience, while returning one's thought to the fact that this all exists in a state of some slightly morbid, existential flux. The patient in the ambulance may be fine at the end of the day, but the work seems to nod as the blinking lights fly by, knowingly acknowledging the possibility of immanent defeat.

Here the objects have not only suffocated from being separated from their utility, literally choked out by an impenetrable material, but die an honorable death of some sort, limply giving themselves over to this other world of deceased presentation. They exude an understanding that the hereafter will provide the viewer some sort of way out, a means to understand a new reality of the object that may only exist within the mind of the spectator. This seems to be fine with Samuel Payne. He has created this environment after all, and wants it to be a slowly opening bloom of experience. Like the *selenicereus grandiflorus*, it may only be alive to the viewer for one night, but if it blooms at all, that will likely be enough.

By Matthew Hassell