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WORKS



RECENT PROJECTS

***"THE LAST
MEETING"***

for the exhibition

**RE:WORKING
LABOR**

Chicago, 2019

GREGORY SHOLETTE

THE LAST MEETING (REWORKED/RESURRECTED)

Repetitive toil, unseen labor, the obligatory slog of activist organizing. This piece depicts the commonplace, overlooked, invisible work of activism. It is secondarily about the preposterous, but necessary effort to radically reform contemporary art. It is not so much a portrait of specific individuals, though the meeting depicted did take place on February 19, 2016.

In 2011, Gulf Labor Coalition (GLC) called for a boycott of the recently announced Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (GAD). GLC collectively asked: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" The appalling answer is that the GAD was to be constructed by underpaid, unjustly treated immigrant laborers. Thousands soon signed GLC's petition. And then the museum invited us to talk. And talk. And talk. Accomplishing little, the 2016 meeting "reworked" in this project was supposed to be different.

GLC gathered representatives from the Human Rights Watch, Building and Wood Workers International, Engineers Against Poverty, and International Labor Organization. Some appeared via Skype. Take-out coffee cups, notepads, documents, and laptops aglow with digital attendees made the conference table look like Frank Gehry's abstract GAD design. This preparatory meeting was tense, but also productive. Later that day GLC would meet Guggenheim Board members to hammer-out a practical and humane contract for the GAD workers. Or, so it was hoped.

Around noon, Sholette snapped a series of pictures thinking how very few images of gatherings like this exist. Sholette has spent untold hours laboring at similar meetings for more than 45 years. Sholette also confesses the absurd pleasure of rendering this moment in pseudo-classical, social realist style accompanied by a cephalophore, an undead saint carrying his own head about to frighten the devil. Let's call this style magic social realism.

Why was this meeting the last to date? Several months after GLC's seemingly productive encounter with the Guggenheim, the museum broke off all future contact with the group. Only later did GLC realize that a precipitous fall in petroleum prices made the Guggenheim project unfeasible for the time being. Rumors of the project's rebirth reappear on a regular basis. Meanwhile, GLC rests, halos and heads close at hand.

Gregory Sholette, *Last Meeting (ReWorked)* in progress, 2019







PHOTOGRAPHY
 The artist's work is a response to the current political and social climate. The sculpture is a commentary on the human condition and the impact of technology on our lives. The figures are depicted in a way that suggests a sense of isolation and disconnection. The dog in the foreground is a symbol of loyalty and companionship in a world where human relationships are often strained. The relief is a powerful statement on the human experience in the 21st century.

Installation at Gallery 400 SAIC Chicago 2019

"INSURRECTION: REDUX" 1984/2022

Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities



INSURRECTION: REDUX

for the exhibition Art for the Future: Central American Solidarities



Insurrection original piece 1984 - mixed media - 109 inches wide by 37.5 high by 6 deep



Insurrection: Redux 2022 - mixed media - 112 inches by 36 by 6

Insurrection was fabricated from wax, latex, wood, plastic, paper, and a silk-screened text, and uses a citation from the “naturalist” writings of Mr. [Ehpraim G. Squire](#) (1821-1888), who once served as the *Special Charge d'affaires for Central America* under President Polk. Squire’s book describes his view that the non-white peoples of Central America, along with what he perceives to be the “strange” zoology of the region (now primarily Nicaragua), will inevitably be superseded by the northern, white race along with its animal and plant life. *Deus Vult - it is the will of god* Squire proclaims in the 19th Century language of Manifest Destiny. And yet, in four repeated citations that make up the substrate of *Insurrection*, Mr. Squire’s words are first intervened upon and then completely submerged beneath the very same tropical forest that he forecast would soon go extinct, no doubt replaced with sugar, coffee, dairy and cattle farming.

...For if the United States, as compared with the Spanish American republics, has achieved an immeasurable advance in all the elements of greatness, that result is eminently due to the rigid and inexorable refusal of the dominant Teutonic stock to debase its blood, impair its intellect, lower its moral standard, or peril its institutions by intermixture with the inferior and subordinate races of man. In obedience to the ordinances of Heaven, it has rescued half of a continent from savage beasts and still more savage men, whose period of existence has terminated, and who must give place to higher organizations and a superior life. Short-sighted philanthropy may lament, and sympathy drop a tear as it looks forward to the total disappearance of the lower forms of humanity, but the laws of Nature are irreversible. DEUS VULT— it is the will of God!

From this point of view, it appears that the only hope of Central America consists in averting the numerical decline of its white population, and increasing the element in the composition of its people. If not brought about by a judicious encouragement of emigration or an intelligent system of colonization, the geographical position and resources of the country indicate that the end will be attained by those more violent means, which among me, as in the material world, often anticipate the slower operations of natural laws.

—*Ehpraim G. Squire* (1858)

This large horizontal work incorporates replicas of foliage from Latin America that gradually engulf Squire’s text. The original 1984 piece was made with assistance from Michael Anderson, an artist and exhibition technician at the American Museum of Natural History. As part of omnibus anti-war project *Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America* my project was exhibited on view at the



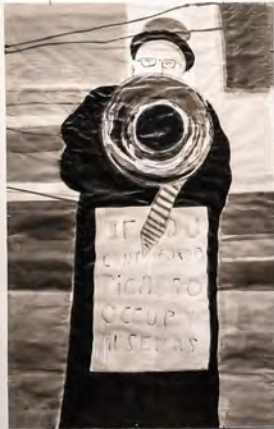
Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities

Artists Call is a landmark work of social protest art, a powerful statement on the role of artists in society and the need for social justice. The work is a collaboration between artists and activists, and it is a testament to the power of art to bring about change. The work is a call to action, a call to artists to use their talents to address the most pressing issues of our time. It is a call to all of us to stand in solidarity with those who are most vulnerable and to work together to create a more just and equitable world.

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DRAWINGS
&
RELIEFS



Small informational text panels on the right side of the gallery wall.

Small informational text panels on the right side of the gallery wall.



"Dark Ammunition." Ink, pencil, paper. 24 X 18.75 Inches. (476.25 X 609.6 mm.) A collection of fantastic "rubber bullets" based on cartoon imagery that is related to such animators as George Herriman (Krazy Kat), and the Fleischer Brothers (Betty Boop and Coco the Clown). The work is owned by art historian Carol Duncan of New York City.



“Occupy Museums: Pergamon Alter, Berlin.” Ink wash, acrylic, paper. 35.5 X 23.5 inches. (901.7 X 506.9 mm.) While they were participating in the controversial Berlin Biennial of 2012, Occupy Museums also carried out an action on the steps of the Pergamon inside the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The Pergamon is a key feature of DARKER because of the reference to the historical novel *The Aesthetics of Resistance* (*Die Ästhetik des Widerstands*) by Peter Weiss in which the key protagonist is an anti-Fascist resistance fighter in Berlin in the 1930s who initiates the book (volume one of three, 1975-1981) with a powerful detailed description of the Pergamon Frieze, which is itself a depiction of a battle between the Olympian Gods and the Titans (or Giants) carved out of stone in 2nd Century BC Greece.



“Whither the Aesthetics of Resistance?” Ink, acrylic,
collage on paper. 18.75 X 24 Inches. (476.25 X 609.6 mm.)
An experimental drawing using a sketch of the cover of
The Aesthetics of Resistance adding ink and various acrylic media.



“Water Protectors, Standing Rock, N. Dakota” Ink wash, acrylic, paper. 35.5 X 23.5 inches. (901.7 X 506.9 mm.) Based on an image downloaded from the protest camp found on the Internet.



“Decolonize This Place, AMNH.” Ink wash, acrylic, paper. 33.5 X 23.5 inches. (850 X 506.9 mm.) This drawing was based on a flip-phone snapshot I took on the day of this action organized by Decolonize This Place that took place at the American Museum of Natural History on October 10 2016



Notebook sketches for 15 Islands



My special enhancement /prosthetic is activated when I am pouring over the eighty plus e-mails I must answer in any given day at the office. It all begins with a sharp pain in my upper abdomen as my spleen suddenly takes on a life of its own. Soon it bursts out of the back of my body, grabs a sable paint brush and begins to draw pictures while I continue to slave over the computer. Only now I am happy to be drawing despite the intense pain my spleen/arm brings with it...



I am NOT my Office, 2001
Art Journal Layout Version



Holy Wars (photomontage 12 X 12" 1984)



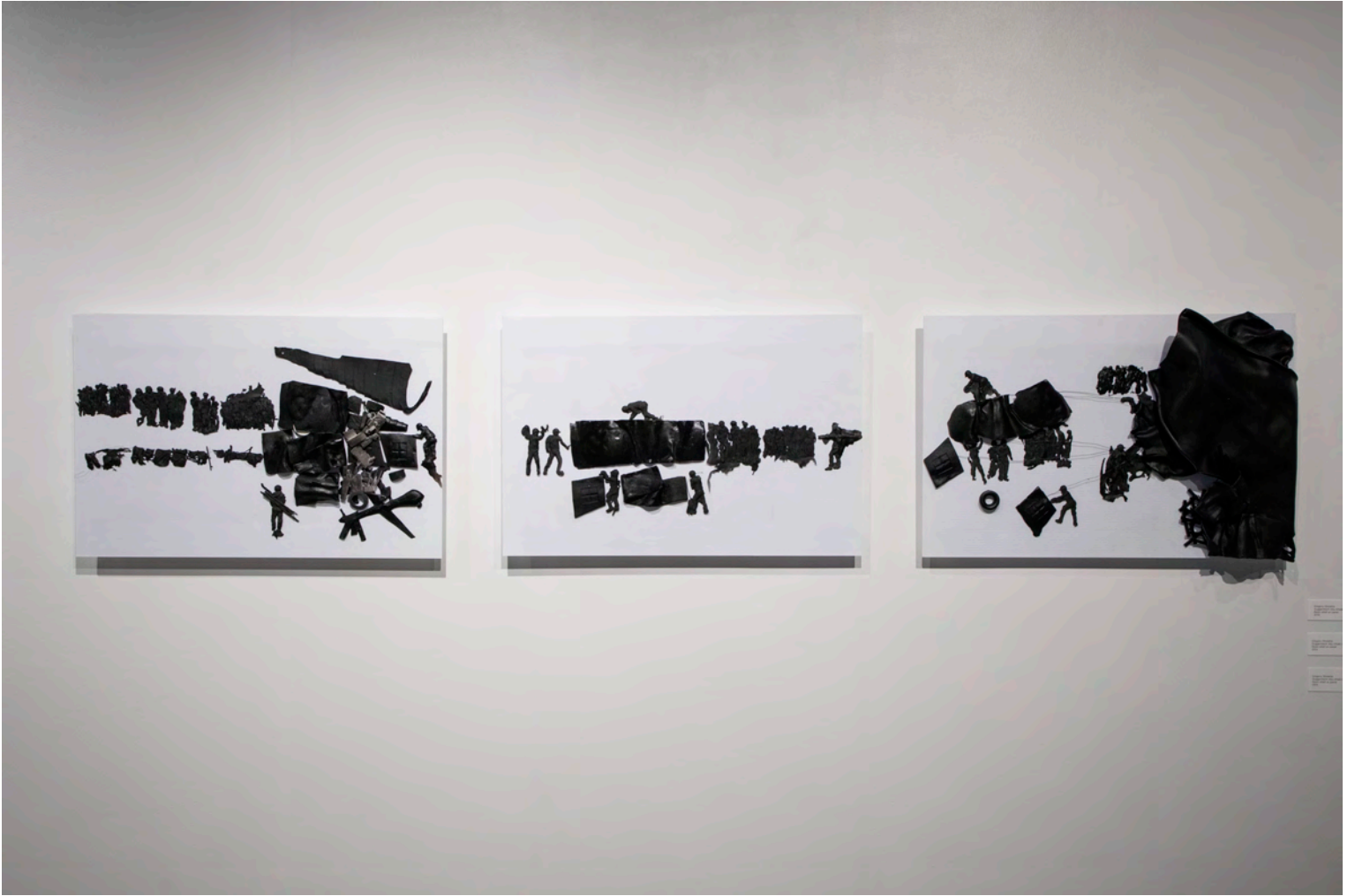
"Our Barricades" is a series of stark black and white bas-relief pieces graphically linking the oily materiality of street barricades to global petropolitics. Taking their queue from urban struggles and the DIY barriers of the Occupy Movement, these works reference the city squares of Istanbul and Kive, Ukraine as well as the Pergamon Frieze, the writings of H.P. Lovecraft and the environmental afflictions of the Anthropocene. 2 of 10 panels above.



Our Barricades: Repurposing Saadiyat Island
Mixed-Media, 18 X 36 X 2", 2012



Our Barricades: Alphabet Panel,
Mixed-Media, 18 X 36 X 2", 2012



Our Barricades: Saadiyat Sequence



Our Barricades: Barricade in a Valise with DIY library, 2014



Fungi Fone/ Strike Art Assemblage, 2020

Modern Library
The Works of Plato
Translated by Benjamin Jowett
Edited and with an Introduction by Irwin Edman





"Mole Light" (2012) installation was created for Plato's Cave in Brooklyn and consists of an "inside-out" model of Plato's Cave fabricated out of fluorescent light fixtures, cardboard, rubber, and a film still from Bertolucci's 1970 film about Italian Fascism, *Il Conformista*.





Exposed Pipe, Byblos Bank Art Gallery, Beirut Lebanon, 2013.

JACOB RIIS PHOTO SET-UP SERIES



Miniature photo setups based on image by Jacob Riis of children playing in and around a water barrel on NY's Lower East Side circa 1890. Each piece is framed and range from 24 X 42 inches to 24 to 112 inches all 6 inches deep, 1995.





Fabricated tableaux of Riis photo mixed media 18 X 24 X 12 inches 1995

http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/spd/WTO/wto_suspects.htm

WTO ACTION COLLECTIBLE

with removable
direct action arm



The WTO Task Force
is looking for tips
about this suspect
from Seattle:12-2-99



*Counter-WTO Action Figure:
With interchangeable street-action arms.*

A miniature figurine modeled on a 1999 Seattle demonstrator originally posted on a police surveillance website soon after the event. 10 X 5 X 5 mixed-media. 2004.

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