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## Trailer Glitter

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# Trailer Glitter

Luke Seward

BFA, Hite Art Institute at the University of Louisville, 2015

A Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts  
at the  
University of Connecticut  
2019

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

Masters of Fine Arts Thesis

**Trailer Glitter**

Presented by  
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University of Connecticut 2019

## *Forward*

My name is Luke Seward, a native of Louisville, Kentucky. I grew up amongst screaming matches, smoke filled bowling alleys, and spent a lot of time in a trailer park. I've been lucky enough to witness a handful of Kentucky Derby's, survive an all-male high school, and dodge religious guilt. This exposure, paired with my influential grandmother Chris, shapes the way I visually express myself.

Chris Adkins was my grandmother, an occupant of Derby Lane Mobile Park in Shively, Kentucky. She was the brightest person I knew, both physically and spiritually. Upon walking up the driveway to her trailer, a large stone Labrador stood guard outside the front door. Once inside, a stuffed bull head begged for eye contact. This was a souvenir purchased by my mother in Daytona, Florida at the age of nineteen. In the adjacent corner stood a plastic knight in shining armor adorned with Mardi Gras beads, whom kept watch over the entrance to the hallway. This statue was about four feet tall, a good size for a curious 7-year-old. Down the hallway, just past the clothing storage addition built onto the side of the trailer, was Chris's bedroom. Occupying her bedside table was a life sized gold viper with red ruby eyes in striking position. The bedroom housed her jewelry collection, four fold out tables worth, neatly organized into sections by color. This presentation method mimicked the flea markets she frequented on the weekends. I always thought if you made it past the guard dog, through the bull head, and around the knight, you'd be forced to reckon with the viper for the treasure. The fridge always contained a pitcher of Five Alive, a refreshing citrus beverage made by Minute Maid, which was used to mix vodka cocktails. This was how her trailer tasted.

The trailer home in Shively, Kentucky, locally known as "Lively, Shively," became my first mentor. Chris, being a true disco queen, customized her clothing with sequins, jewels, and large brooches. To some, this style is perceived as gaudy, or outlandish, but once you've laid eyes on the infield section of the Kentucky Derby after race 8 nothing seems unreasonable.

This scene has served as the backdrop of my imagination, a cabinet of curiosity, or trailer of curiosity in my case. Chris had a stash of random objects under a table in the living

room, little knickknacks she collected from flea markets and consignment shops. Every so often, she would allow me take something home from the pile. This was a real treat, considering the presence of so many awe inspiring objects and materials that refracted light; including the TV remote, which was dotted and streaked with bright colors from her changing the channel with wet finger nail polish applied. No matter what I chose from the stash, it held value because it was selected by Chris to begin with. I soon had the shelves in my apartment bedroom decorated with strange objects gifted to me by Chris. By the age of nine, parts of that trailer seeped into my everyday environment and to this day I find myself at flea markets looking for treasure.

Collection, in one way or another, is an activity that all artists participate in. We collect marks, strokes, images, objects, and materials that serve as substrates and sources of inspiration. Chris showed me how to engage in this process, through her jewelry, clothing, and interior decoration. When I saw her in public I saw that trailer. It was almost as if the trailer was using Chris as its muse, curating an outfit for her that reflected its precarious interior; insuring she left a trail of glitter she could always follow home. She lived the way she dressed and dressed the way she lived without separation.

Her influence came at a time of personal turmoil. As a five-year-old navigating a divorce, restraining orders, and carting a laundry basket of clothes between apartment rentals, Chris became my knight in shining armor. If you put enough sequins together an illusion to armor is created. Her presence diffused an unwavering anxiety, a reminder to stay in the light, to shine, to be seen, to be fearless, to focus my attention on constructive creative pursuits.

Fast forward almost ten years to 1998 when Nintendo 64 took children by storm. The game *1080 Snowboarding* allowed players to choose a rider and choose a board. I became obsessed with the idea of customization and choice, gravitating towards video games that allowed me to feel individualized. I created cars in *Need for Speed* and custom players in the *Madden* series. Chris was obsessed with customization in the physical sense, achieving a sense of individuality and glamour from custom clothing. Around this same time, I began creating collages from magazines and hanging drawings on the walls in my room. I had a cabinet for my clothes that I arranged collected stickers on and soon, with the assistance of my mother, began

painting the furniture in my room. In a sense, I began constructing my own version of Chris's trailer home, customizing anything and everything I could, all the way down to the doorknob. I too had a snake on the bedside table, only it didn't have ruby eyes and I had to feed it.

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## SECTION ONE: *Who?*

My name is Luke Seward. I have been fortunate enough to cross paths with people who have had a major influence on my approach and delivery as an artist. Art critic Dave Hickey refers to these circumstances in relation to the Darwinian concept of the survival of the luckiest. I was lucky to have a grandmother who encouraged me to stray from the idea of standard practice. I was lucky to be raised in a dysfunctional family whose resentment I use as fuel. I was lucky to be taken under the wing of an influential Louisville artist. I am lucky to have made it to Connecticut typing this fully funded degree thesis.

Louisville, Kentucky, where I was born and raised, is famous for a few things: High quality Louisville Slugger baseball bats, top shelf Kentucky Bourbon, and most notably the annual Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs. The Kentucky Derby has been famously dubbed “Decadent and Depraved,” by Gonzo Journalist Hunter S. Thompson, whom coincidentally grew up less than three miles from where I did. In a weird, twisted way the Kentucky Derby serves as one of my mentors, informing my psyche and taste regarding DIY fashion, fanaticism, class, gambling, and group dynamics.

Most news coverage portrays the Kentucky Derby in an elegant manner, showcasing the Grand Stand and Millionaires Row areas of Churchill Downs. These areas are located on the outside of the track and are home to the horse owners, movie stars, the well dressed, and deep pocketed. The grassy area on the interior of the dirt track is known as the Infield, and this area frames the hypothesis I hold about the most famous two minutes in sports.

The infield does not have a dress code and the number of patrons admitted is unlimited, permitting an experience for anyone and everyone who can cover the \$40 entrance fee. The fanaticism is in full effect as fans sport customized hats and clothes, hot gluing faux roses and plastic horses to straw hats and second hand sport coats. Race programs and mint juleps are clinched between cheering fists as thoroughbreds speed past chain-link fencing. Large LED monitors broadcast a live feed of the race, informing the spectators of who is in the lead. With the passing of each race, the crowd becomes more and more rambunctious as pockets get lighter and clothing becomes optional. Public nudity, mud wrestling, and slip and slides are some of the activities encouraged by the still standing. What attracts me most is the

juxtaposition between the well dressed, the not so, the mud, the booze, and the wagering. A mere 30-foot dirt track separates the feral from the famous and the cigarettes from the cigars.

The common denominator between these worlds is the anticipation and excitement of the horses coming down the home stretch. No matter if you're on the inside, or outside of the track, the crowd roars; cheering, whistling, and applauding their chosen horse to run faster, as if their jubilation will increase the horses speed. When there's real money on the line, people get excited. Patrons formulate interesting devices for choosing which horses to wager on, these are a few I've come in contact with:

1. *The Seasoned*: One who studies the program intensely, betting on record and logic in hopes of big payoffs.
2. *The Good Time*: One who makes low wagers, usually betting on their favorite horse name or jockey silk colors.
3. *The Looker*: One who watches the horses strut through the paddock before the race, choosing a horse they think looks like it will win in comparison to all the others.
4. *The Inside Man*: A trainer, exerciser, or caretaker who works at the track who has inside information on which horse they think will win.
5. *The Gate Guy*: One who believes the key to winning is betting on the right gate the horse is assigned to start out of.
6. *The Committed*: One who bets on the same jockey, trainer, or owner all the time – a sign of loyalty and trust.
7. *The Favorite*: One who chooses the horse most likely to win the race, or who everyone else chooses – a low risk taker.
8. *The Long Shot*: One who chooses the horse least likely to win the race, one who gravitates towards underdogs – a high risk taker.

I see the dynamics and intricacies of the Kentucky Derby as a metaphor for art making. There is a strong parallel between looking, choosing, wagering, winning, and losing. All this points back to Dave Hickey's hypothesis on art, nodding to the Darwinian concept of the

survival of the luckiest. As artists, do we bet on *The Long Shot*? Formulating an expression that tests the boundaries of standard practice? Or do we chase sure bets and artistic fads like *The Favorite*? Being sure of a reward is tempting. Are we *The Committed* when it comes to schools of thought, mediums of choice, or historical ideas about what art is or looks like? Do we listen to *The Inside Man*? A curator, critic, or collector. Do we prioritize opticality over concept? *The Lookers* might. *The Seasoned* are dedicated, they have an opinion, but remain curious about the formula – they know how to read the program, but also know it's not the key to winning. In the words of Clint Eastwood, "Are you feeling lucky?"

In the *Forward*, I discussed my first mentor, Chris and her trailer, and would like to elaborate on how the idea of the knight in shining armor functions with regard to becoming a visual artist. Historically, a knight in shining armor is a person who comes to the aid of another in a gallant manner. This concept outlines the current role artists occupy in society and the function of their actions within the species. This connection was sparked by listening to Dave Hickey discuss and define the word contempt as "positive boredom" and why humans are unable to achieve such a state. Artists, writers, poets, and musicians create work that elicits an emotive response, whether that be anxiety, ecstasy, confusion, or excitement. Hickey discusses why we are unable to achieve contentment, citing Morse Peckham's concept from his 1965 book *Man's Rage for Chaos*. Peckham proposes that the human species demands that someone be there to deal with threats, to address the source of danger in an active role of protection. This is confusing seeing as we are at the top of the food chain, and therefore the safest species on the planet. Being the safest species doesn't mean that this role dissolves, instead we have developed subliminal and disjunctive ways of perpetuating it. A good example Hickey gives of this occurrence is the development of rhyme, arguing that we feel anxious in its absence, or the development of rules in art so that we may feel nervous when they are not followed. In this way, art making is the artist as the knight in shining armor, unleashing dragons on society and asking, "Do you want to be saved?" Everyone answers yes, so we proceed to slay the dragon we brought in the first place. The dragon is our area of interest and serves as a modality for sharing states of non-contentment. This idea doesn't mean the species likes us very much or understands what sort of contribution we're offering. When contemptment begins to turn its

ugly head again, society will call and ask, “Could you bring the dragon by again? We’re positively bored.”

The second knight in shining armor I encountered was Mary Carothers, Professor of Photography at the Hite Art Institute at the University of Louisville. She actively exemplified a sustainable and successful art practice, not only how to live and breathe it, but how to make it a livelihood. I was in my mid-twenties, coming up on two years of sobriety and making the opportunity to pursue a career in visual art a priority. As an undergraduate, Mary taught me the ropes; demystifying processes and pushing me to hash out concepts. I was curious and she provided insight, opportunities, and support in any way she could. She was a Professor of Photography by day, but by night she was a sculptor, installation artist, grant writer extraordinaire, and social activist pursuing ambitious public art projects. I slowly became more and more involved in the night work and upon graduation was hired as Mary’s full time studio assistant for a large public art project funded by the Louisville Metro Government.

This project focused on the history of Louisville and immigration through porcelain doorknobs, framing the Ohio River as a symbol of place, story, and community. We collected doorknobs from local historians and even created some of our own through CAD drawings and 3D printing. We cast the doorknobs in porcelain through a multitude of molds and secured each one to a steel rod that was set into the earth. We installed hundreds of these in close succession, creating an undulating wave on a sloped hillside running parallel with the Ohio River.

What I admired most about this project was Mary’s consistent pushing towards the limits, both physically and financially. We worked long days, until our eyes twitched and the snack bowls ran dry. After the project was complete and installed, it caught the eye of a local collector whose collection consists of many great artists including Maya Lin, Sol LeWitt, and Eva Rothschild. We recreated and reinstalled the project on the private property of the collector the following summer. Mary Carothers taught me to push it, and trust it will pay off. Shortly after finishing the second installation under her wings, she coached me through the process of applying to graduate school for an MFA. I was accepted to the University of Connecticut, where

I met my third knight in shining armor – Barry Rosenberg, Director of Contemporary Art Galleries at the University of Connecticut.

Barry reminded me a lot of Mary, somewhat of an outcast with a surplus of ambition. Upon landing on campus Barry put me straight to work. I admired his almost compulsive work ethic and passion for tackling challenging projects. He took me behind the scenes of the New York City art scene, advising me on which galleries to pay attention to, and which not to be caught dead in. Barry honed my art goggles, showing me how and where to look, who to pay attention to, how to hang an exhibition, and how to acquire funding. I looked up to Barry and soaked up his lessons like a sponge, realizing this was a once in a lifetime encounter – lucky again.

The first time we went to Manhattan together, we were to pick up a painting by Jocelyn Hobbie for a show Barry was curating titled *Glamour*. We were greeted at the condo door by a woman with a disgruntled look on her face, she communicated “Hurry up and leave,” while simultaneously saying “Hello.” Barry and I made our way through the condo, quickly glancing around and taking inventory of the collector’s taste. Finally, we made it to a back bedroom where the Hobbie painting was centered over a twin bed.

The collector, staring over our shoulder, kept a watchful eye on our every move. I’m nervous, this is my first time in NYC on art business with a gallery director who specifically advised me not to reveal he was the director of the gallery the painting was destined for, Barry wanted to blend in as an art handler. While preparing to cover the painting in bubble wrap, the husband busts into the room, fresh out of the shower, wearing nothing but a towel around his waist. “Why didn’t you tell me this was happening today?!” he yelled, slamming the door and promptly stomping off before anyone could answer. This was somewhat jarring and now I was ready to leave; in a haste I slipped while cutting the bubble wrap and sliced my finger wide open. Internally I panicked, pressing it firmly against my jeans, moving my body so no one could see what I’d done. Blood and high end art don’t mix, and now Barry was giving me the cue to handle the painting and head for the door. I press hard against my jeans in a last ditch effort to clog the wound, then quickly grab the painting by the back stretcher, smile, and head for the door. We make it the van safely, where I admit to Barry I cut my finger before picking up the

work. We inspect the stretcher bar to find a small, circular spot of blood soaked into the underside of the wood. He laughs and says, “Don’t worry about it, no one will notice.” After this reaction I knew he was one of my knights – sorry Jocelyn.

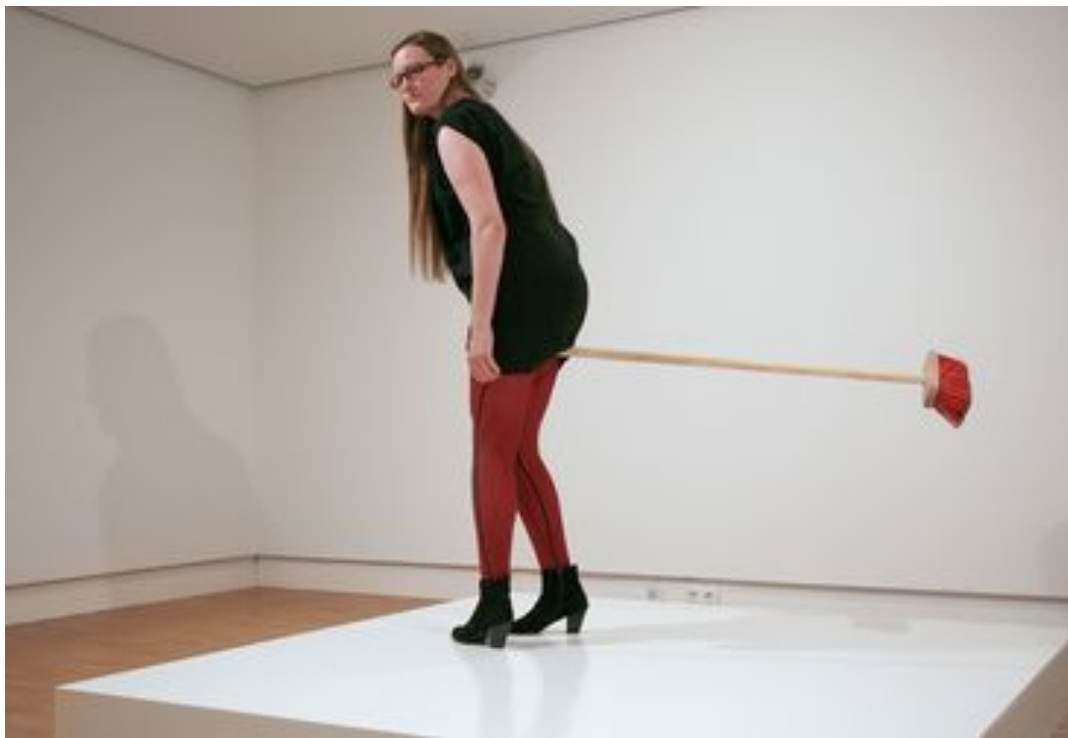
I have a few more informal knights I owe my development and inspiration to. These knights are artists Erwin Wurm and Sarah Sze. While these artists make very different work, they share one commonality: Renegotiating our relationship with familiar objects. Erwin and Sarah have impacted the way I approach my own creative process by pioneering alternative methods of looking.

Erwin Wurm blurs the line between sculpture and performance through a series of altered objects that are intended to be interacted with. I admire Wurm’s agency to encourage audience participation, even as his work sits on pristine white pedestals. The moment you step onto the pedestal to engage with one of his sculptures, the experience turns into an art action. What I mean by art action, is the cognitive recognition of participating in an activity or environment that an artist has offered to you. This means being conscious of your own body, of the artist acknowledging your body, and the circumstances you find yourself in.

Wurm’s series of works titled *One Minute Sculptures*, are created with and for the human body. Objects are altered and situations are devised in order to accentuate the human form. Taking into account limbs and gravity, Wurm uses action as a modality for both looking at and experiencing sculpturing in new and humorous ways. I’m attracted to the duality that exists in his work, relative to the participant’s personal experience and the experience viewers have of looking at the participant as a sculptural form. Once the participant engages in the sculptural action Wurm has proposed, viewers who are not participants are confronted with a unique sculpture for roughly 60 seconds.



Erwin Wurm, *Astronomical Enterprise*, One Minute Sculpture, 2005/2014



Erwin Wurm, *The Beauty Business*, One Minute Sculpture, 2011





Erwin Wurm, *Head TV*, One Minute Sculpture, 2017



Erwin Wurm, *Deep Snow*, One Minute Sculpture, 2016

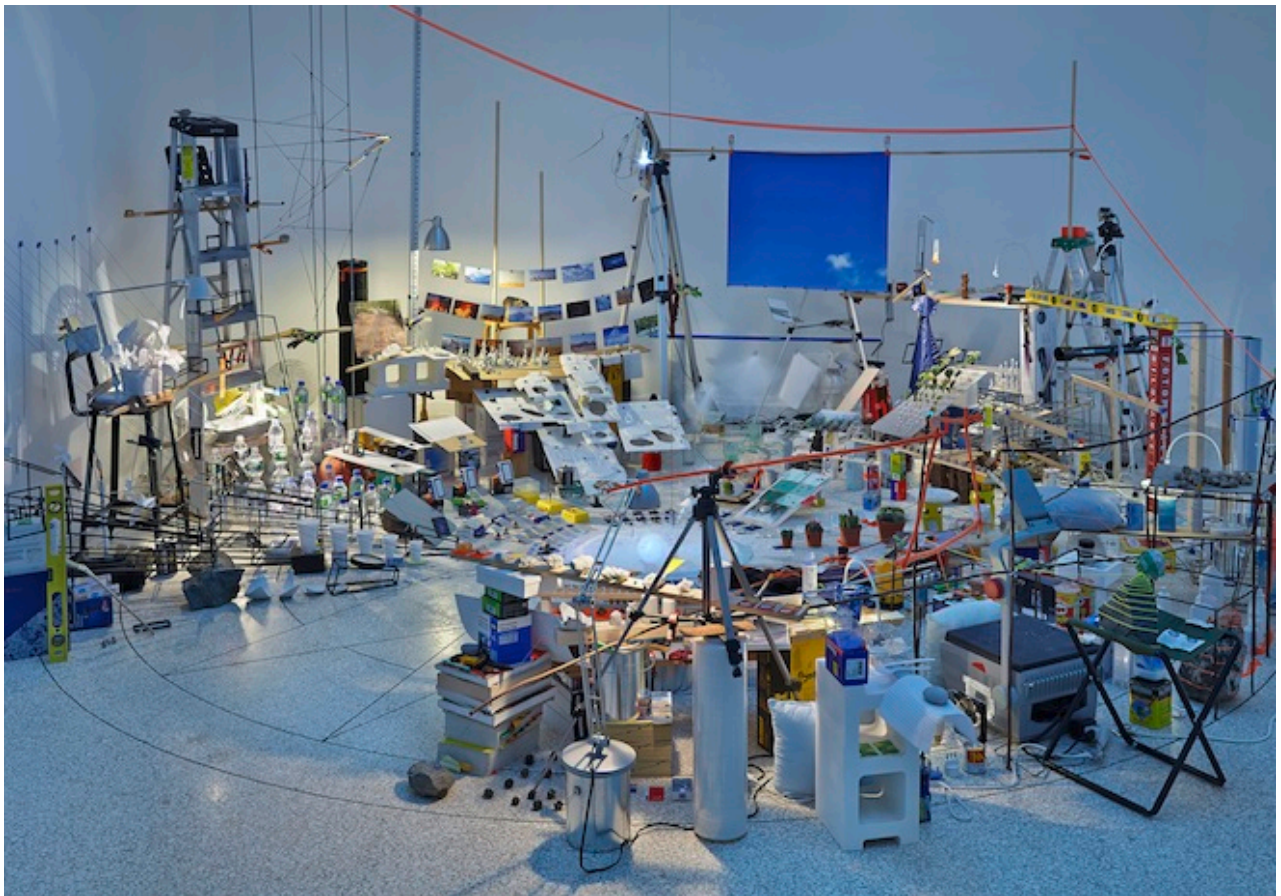
Sarah Sze is a sculptor utilizing everyday objects to create multimedia installations. She has had a profound impact on my practice regarding objects and the idea of making the mundane meaningful. Referencing the tools the installation is constructed with, the surrounding architecture, and the everyday object, Sze asks us to renegotiate our relationship with the familiar. This idea is exciting for me in relation to one of my early mentors, *The Wizard of Oz*. Using the film as a form of escape and distraction, I formed an intimate relationship with Dorothy and her crew. Dorothy taught me an important lesson that Sze left the breadcrumbs for: The mundane becomes meaningful when re-contextualized. Having seen the film so many times it did become mundane, I knew what was going to happen from scene to scene, the jingles fossilized in my memory:

*"We get up at twelve and start to work at one  
Take an hour for lunch and then at two we're done  
Jolly good fun  
Ha ha ha  
Ho ho ho  
And a couple of tra la las  
That's how we laugh the day away  
In the merry old land of Oz."*

- "The Merry Old Land of Oz" sung by the Emerald City Townspeople upon Dorothy's arrival, just after the famous horse of a different color makes its cameo.

This is important because familiarity dwindles the initial fire stimulated by new experience. In the case of the *Wizard of Oz*, this fire was stoked again by seeing the characters re-contextualized through fan gear, collectables, and mascot representations. When I saw the cast on t shirts, or parading in costume at the mall I was awe struck through my established intimacy, the thrill reinvigorated. In this way, I was comforted by the fanaticism others shared

with the film and intrigued by the alternative format I was being presented with. This idea plays a large part in why I am an artist; I'm obsessed with sharing experience in alternative ways, renegotiating material and space, and making the mundane exciting again. Sarah Sze and her work laid the foundation for my own investigation into the concept of the mundane and how this idea has informed my life and artistic practice.



Sarah Sze, *Triple Point (Pendulum)*, Venice Biennale, 2013



Sarah Sze, *Triple Point (Eclipse)*, Venice Biennale, 2013





Sarah Sze, *Triple Point (Planetarium)*, Venice Biennale, 2013

## SECTION TWO: *Why?*

Mama Chris and The Kentucky Derby share two distinct commonalities: DIY fashion and high/low brow culture. My experience with these two have broken down the barriers surrounding the impossible. Mama Chris took the idea of glamour and made it possible through scavenging and treasure hunting on the outskirts of consumer culture. She attained her dreams through active participation and embracing cheap, second-hand knock off jewelry, co-opting the aesthetic of Hollywood movie stars. I'm interested in the pursuit of the idealized self and what compromises and innovations are encountered along the way. These hurdles become adaptations, or methods of problem solving that lead to unique expressions. If she had the opportunity to become a clothing designer or movie star, she likely would have, but perhaps she had more fun pretending in her trailer. She gave me a head start, I simply followed her moves and this is where I landed – thanks Chris.

Utilizing current technology and fusing it with the everyday, is a concept my work is in constant dialogue with. Armed with a Mama Chris sensibility, I collect objects from roadsides, dumpsters, dollar stores, and most recently online market places. I respond to the attainability of products once they cross a certain threshold in time, which could be defined as obsolete or abundant. A culture focused on convenience has a surplus of options, with products and equipment becoming outdated at rapid rates. For instance, I have become increasingly aware of the surplus of at-home gym equipment, publically available at yard sales and online with minimal price tags. Thirty years ago, at-home gym equipment was primarily reserved for the elite but now the online marketplace is inundated with it for next to nothing – in a sense this is my second hand jewelry. My thought is that, as a culture, we are located between the tangibility of at-home gym equipment of the 90s and the contemporary, cheap, 24/7 gym memberships from prolific companies like Planet Fitness. As an artist, I recognize these objects have crossed the threshold and choose to take action. I am able to take action because the financial capital to begin experimentation is low, permitting a liberal approach to possibility.

I respond to culture because it generates curiosity and surprise in my life, just like dressing up for the Kentucky Derby does the same for the thousands of people who participate and attend. Art making inherently has an essential solitude, while simultaneously sustaining a

global discourse. As artists, we are in dialogue with culture, with ourselves, and with each other. The variables from materials, to media, to interpretative content makes for a rich field that offers relatability, insight, and activism. I'm honored to be part of a community that remains curious, that's willing to take risks and stand by them.

### SECTION THREE: *What and How?*

I make videos, often presented as loops on 50" flat panel, digital monitors. The size of the monitor is important because anything larger becomes difficult to handle by yourself. I'm curious about monitors as a cultural icon and the various ways we encounter them on a daily basis. We carry tiny monitors in pockets and slightly larger ones on our backs with keyboards attached. There's a monitor on your desk and on the living room wall. Gas pumps have monitors too, and a monitor at the Wal-Mart self-checkout in the Orwellian sense. Treadmills are equipped with monitors, as well as menus in the drive thru.

Monitors are versatile and attractive, omitting a soft glow that our eyes naturally find. It seems a monitor's nearest optical competitor would be high visibility orange construction gear. As a culture, will we ever become immune to this attraction? I've seen orange construction gear my entire life and I still notice it immediately when it is present, likely due to the cultural safety context surrounding it. When I work out at the gym I look at the monitors on the walls between work outs, others look at their phones. I don't take my phone in because I don't want to be distracted, but naturally find the glowing black rectangle anyway. The interesting thing about the monitors at the gym is that they're hung way up high, so everyone can see them. This prevents a head on, intimate viewing experience that I speculate allows me to distance myself from the content. It seems out of reach and causes me to squint, but what if that was intentional and implemented into an artwork?

When I visit my parents, the TV is always on. This could be a generational thing because people my age (30) don't typically have their TVs on all the time, let alone a subscription to cable. The smartphone and its apps are the contemporary version of cable. I don't want this conversation to develop into an essay about screen time and its negative relational effects, but I do think it is important to outline the role the monitor plays in this historical moment (2019) and its nomadic nature.

The first flat panel monitor was released in 1997 by Sony and sold for \$15,000, making it well out of reach for most consumers. Fast forward to 2007, the first iPhone is released. My parents didn't upgrade to flat panel monitors until roughly 2009 and my mother and I bought iPhones at the same time in 2010. My father still has a landline and a flip phone that



perpetually stays plugged into his vehicle's cigarette lighter. This gives me about a decade of experience with the nomadic nature of carrying a flat panel monitor in my pocket and having one mounted on the wall in my domestic sphere.

In 2017, I began making static sculptures out of mundane materials, assembling them in unconventional ways. It was difficult for me to re-contextualize mundane objects and materials without participating in the context myself. I began “dancing” with my static sculptures, animating them in relation to my body. This opened up the door to my first experiments in performance art. I took a nail gun to a normal household chair until it was covered, resembling more of a cactus than anything else. During a studio visit with artist Erin Koch Smith, she flicked one of the nails creating a dissonant sound that surprised both of us. Implementing this discovery into a performance, I sat nude playing the chair like an instrument accompanied by intermittent balloon explosions. It was that flick which sparked a key conversation that would lead to the current state of my work – thanks Erin.



Luke Seward, *Years*, video still, 2018

The above photo is a video still from the documentation of the performance *Years*. After performing for Deborah Dancy's Experimental Drawing class I was urged to document the performance. I scheduled a studio visit with Alison Paul, UConn Professor of Animation, shortly after creating the documentation. After watching the documentation of *Years*, Alison asked me a pivotal question that had an influential impact on my trajectory as an artist: "Is this documentation of a performance or is this video art?" This question threw me for a loop. I didn't understand what the difference was. My initial response was that it was indeed documentation of a performance. She challenged this stance, asking me about my decisions regarding camera position, scene construction, background choice, and lighting. If I was simply documenting the performance, why did I take the time to make all these external decisions regarding the video. It was through this conversation that I realized I could "dance" with my sculptures, I could construct sets, I could make video art – thanks Deborah and Alison.

In *Years*, I set up the camera straight on, insuring my composition was flat – this was my photographic background surfacing. I began, and still continue, to implement a flat perspective with a central focus. The ultimate flat experience is an aerial one as I learned in animation, so I implemented the use of a drone to begin experimenting with composition. I build sets that included sculptures, utilizing the ground as flat substrate and building towards the hovering camera. The drone provides a live feed to my phone, permitting me to reorganize and change certain elements in real time, yielding unexpected results. This part of the creative process is addictive; once I begin creating a set it takes on a life of its own that totally exceeds my initial vision. I provide the scenario and the pieces, but the perspective dictates the relationships that are possible. I don't use any post production CGI or graphics, everything you see is actually present in the filming of the video. In this way, my work sports a DIY, backyard aesthetic that implements analog special effects to communicate ideas. Sounds a lot like hot glue and faux roses right?

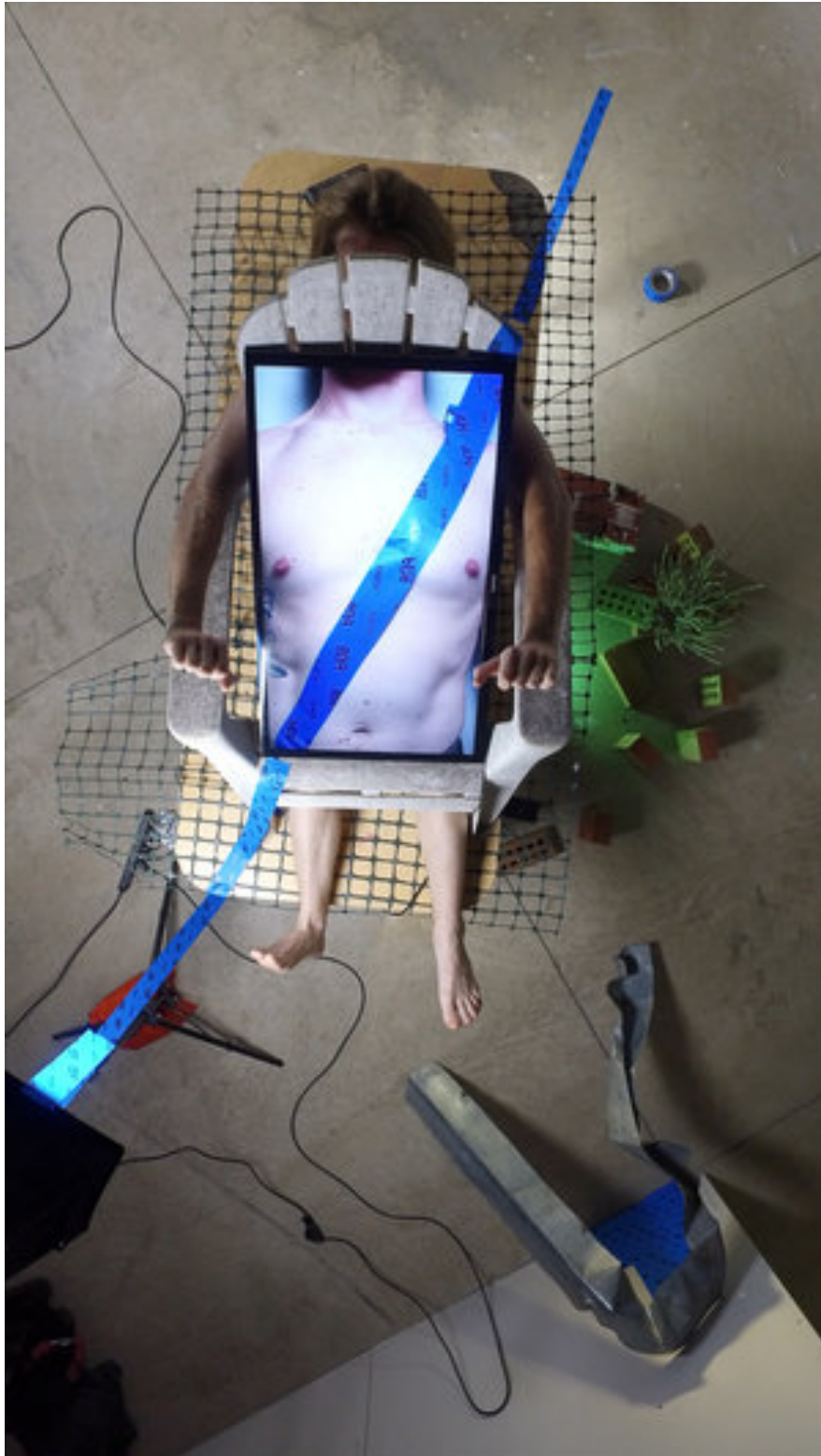


Luke Seward, *Suggested for You*, video still, 2018



Luke Seward, *Push*, video still, 2018





Luke Seward, *Blue Exterior*, video still, 2018



Luke Seward, *Suggested for You* and *Blue Exterior* (installed), ODETTA, 2019

The videos run on continuous loops as a reference to the Sisyphean concept of repetition. I'm interested in the idea of perpetual struggle and the subliminal messages communicated with subtle gesture. The videos are nonlinear, lacking a clear beginning or end. This decision enhances the object hood of the monitor, framing it in a way that asks the viewer to reconsider their established relationship with the familiar black rectangle. I position the monitors at unconventional heights and angles to emphasize the idea of reconsideration. The monitors directly acknowledge the viewers body, providing a sweet spot, which is the point when one's body comes into direct alignment with the angled monitor. This spot can be felt and serves as the optimal viewing experience for my work.

The cords that accompany these works have captured more of my curiosity than I would have given them credit for. 80% of the extension cords available are high visibility orange, they want to be seen so we don't trip over them. My initial response when I began video installations was to hide the cords in cracks, or use cord hidere on the floors and walls to conceal their identity. After wrestling them into hiding I watched the videos, where cords were integrated into the compositions, implemented as an allusion to the artificiality of the constructed set. I began piling the extension cords under the monitors, the brightest colors I could find. This felt like a full embrace of video, electricity, architecture, and digital art that led me to heavily consider the space around the work in much greater detail. The work feels more alive in this way, like an entity that stares back at you in all its moving parts – it has nothing to hide.

I love the tactile nature of sculpture, the perspective of photography, the versatility of video, and the thrill of performance. These four elements are at the core of my work. The body is usually present in some capacity, although I have been experimenting with other ideas of performative action. The body serves as a form of punctuation, or measuring tool that enhances or confuses perspective. The live feed provided by my iPhone offers a freedom to rearrange, move, contort, stretch, and bend my body in the composition. This method allows me to see what the camera sees before anything is recorded. By implementing this current advancement in the field of electronics I extend my creative process, utilizing the potential of this historical moment (2019).



Luke Seward, *Bar Soap* (installed), ODETTA, 2019



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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In loving memory of Mama Chris.