

Passivity, Trust, and Empathy: How I Make Art and Would Like to Treat People Budd Dees

*He was like a tiny watchmaker, and he drew up a chair and knelt on it so that he could get directly over the work. When Berenice gave him some raisins, he did not stick them all around as any other human child would do; he used only two for the eyes; but immediately he realized they were too large – so he divided one raisin carefully and put in eyes, two specks for the nose, and a little grinning raisin mouth. When he had finished, he wiped his hands on the seat of his shorts, and there was a little biscuit man with separate fingers, and hat on, and even walking stick. John Henry had worked so hard that the dough was now gray and wet. But it was a perfect little biscuit man, and, as a matter of fact, it reminded Frankie of John Henry himself.**

My studio houses nonjudgmental play. I forgive the work, accepting the whims of the material. Acquiescence forgets ideas of right and wrong, righteous and amoral, institutional and rebellious; those rigid notions flower into more complex and plentiful possibilities. The studio permits the possibility of failure.

The process is one of loosening, trusting the work enough to not police it. I slacken intention, allowing pieces to transition into what they are, rather than bullying them with expectation. When nursing the interdependent responses of materials, forms, and colors, the pieces develop themselves. The pieces self-identify.

“How?” John Henry suddenly asked. “How did that boy change into a girl?”

Through remaking and unmaking I let go of predetermined outcomes; the work performs itself and its curiosities. Bandages and patches alter what at first seemed essential about the thing. It may break in its center because it wasn't meant to have one. Its colors may lose their vibrance because the object is shy. It may crack into many pieces because it resists singularity. In these failures, I maintain that when it breaks, it does so to reveal more of its own self than it had before.

When Berenice brought the biscuit man from the oven... it had swelled so that all the work of John Henry had been cooked out, the fingers were run together, and the walking stick resembled a sort of tail. But John Henry just looked at it through his glasses, wiped it with his napkin, and buttered the left foot.

My relationship to material reflects how I aim to treat other people, and, if I ever adopt, how I'd like to raise my child. I release control with the same patience and empathy needed in line at a coffee shop or in a traffic jam. The joy the practice brings is similar to the pleasures of passive anal sex. I must relax, trust, and remain receptive.

* All italics are pulled from *The Member of the Wedding* by Carson McCullers

/// Budd Dees

Digital + Time-based Media + Sculpture

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/RECENTLY/

Instructor of Digital Media (Dassance School of Fine Arts)
College of Central Florida

I teach Digital Media at the College of Central Florida. I prepare students for a wide variety of options to send them towards their diverse career and educational goals as graphic designers, game developers, video producers, and new media artists. I am also responsible for shaping the development and ensuring continual growth for this new program.

Artist in Residence
Fermenter

I was recently involved in the Fermenter residency as a practicing artist. This residency awards four months of free studio space in exchange for holding open studio nights to the public and maintaining active studio research.

Contributor to Art Papers

One of my goals is to write more about art and exhibitions as a new dimension of my practice as a maker and instructor. I just published a review of a local painting show in Art Papers.

Exhibition at Low Museum
No Prohibition (with Galen Olmsted)

Galen Olmsted and I create collaborative photomontages by inviting third parties to edit our compositions. The Low Museum in Atlanta, GA just accepted our proposal to exhibit this series of works entitled Correspondence Series.

/EDUCATION/

Master of Fine Arts - Art & Technology / 2013
University of Florida / Gainesville, FL
Graduate Fellowship Awarded

Bachelor of Fine Arts - Digital Media / 2010
University of Georgia / Athens, GA

EXHIBITIONS/
SCREENINGS

2015

No Prohibition - anticipated (curated by Galen Olmsted)
Low Museum, Atlanta, GA.

Have You Ever Asked Me for Something that I, that I Wouldn't Do?
(two-person exhibition with Galen Olmsted)
Plunkett Gallery, Mercer University, Macon, GA.

Faculty Exhibition
Webber Gallery, Ocala, FL.

2014

Moveable Types (curated by Victoria Camblin)
Ponce Gallery, Atlanta, GA.

The Usual Mating Habits of Ground and Matter (two-person exhibition
with Galen Olmsted)
Ernest G. Welch Gallery, Atlanta, GA.

RSI-T (curated by Naomi Lev)
Slag Gallery, Brooklyn, NY.

RSI-T, Part 2, (curated by Naomi Lev)
Fire Barn Gallery, Muskegan, MI.

Inside/Out (as part of ACA's residency program invited by Dana Shutz)
Atlantic Center Studios, New Smyrna Beach, FL.

2013

Das Unmoegliche Haus (invited by Adrian Brun)
HomeBase Project, Berlin, Germany.

48 Hour Performance Art Marathon (part of the Month of Performance
Art)
ACUD Gallery, Berlin, Germany.

I Don't See This Happening Again (curated by Adrian Brun)
The Basement, Berlin, Germany.

I'm Tired and I Know You Ain't Worth It (thesis exhibition)
University Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

EXHIBITIONS/
SCREENINGS
(CONTINUED)

Social Interventions (with Austin Reeves)
4141 Garage Gallery, San Diego, CA.

2013 CFA Student Juried Exhibition (Curator: Juan Roseline-Valadez,
Director, Rubell Family Collection)
University Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

2012

Experimental Film and Video (invited by Roger Beebe)
Atlantic Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

Graduate Invitational (curated by Charlie Cummings)
4Most Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

When You Wish Upon a Time, Afterall
WARPhaus Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

2011

Do You Like Me? The Ecstasy of Budd Dees (solo)
WARPhaus Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

Juried Exhibition (Curator: Kerry Oliver-Smith, Curator of Contemporary
Art at the Harn Museum of Art)
University Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

Blessed Unions (as part of the SGC International Printmakers Confer-
ence)
Fort Gondo Compound for the Arts, St. Louis, MO.

Quotidian
WARPhaus Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

Location Fact Sheet
Focus Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

transWARP
WARPhaus Gallery, Gainesville, FL.

2010

Art Bash (coordinated by Wes Kline)
Fine Arts C, Gainesville, FL.

EXHIBITIONS/
SCREENINGS
(CONTINUED)

LO-CALe: Contemplating Space
The Food Co-op, Gainesville, FL.

Juried Exhibition (curator: Tom Southall, Curator of Photography at the
Harn Museum of Art)
Dialogue Space, Gainesville, FL.

2008

Let's Pow-Wow 2
Little Kings, Athens, GA.

i heart net.art
iheartnetart.com.

One Night Only
Caledonia Lounge, Athens, GA.

Strikethrough
Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

2007

Let's Pow-Wow
Nuci's Space, Athens, GA.

Up All Night
OK Coffee, Athens, GA.

Juried Exhibition
Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

Everything Must Go
Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

Just Add Water
Secret Squirrel, Athens, GA.

Over and Out
University of Oregon Lobby, Eugene, OR.

EXHIBITIONS/
SCREENINGS
(CONTINUED)

Exchange

Columbus State University, Columbus, GA.

Cowboys with Capguns

Clayton Street Gallery, Athens, GA.

2006

fwd:Re:virus

Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

iVirus

Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

/Residencies/

2015 Fermenter, Gallery Protocol, Gainesville, FL.

2014 Atlantic Center for the Arts (with master artist Dana Schutz), New Smyrna Beach, FL.

2013 HomeBase V, Berlin, Germany.

SARP Artist in Residence in collaboration with the Department of Agricultural & Biological Engineering, Gainesville, FL

2012 Creative Retreat via Elsewhere's Residency Program, Greensboro, NC.

/Awards & Grants/

2014 Joan Mitchell Foundation Award

2013 Student Artist in Residence Program: An Interdisciplinary Exchange of Creativity Promoting Resource Sustainability

2012 School of Art + Art History Travel Grant

2010-13 Graduate Fellowship from University of Florida

/BIBLIOGRAPHY/

Kordoski, Kyra. "In Conversation with Naomi Lev: Preliminary Study: RSI - T (Repetitive Strain Injury - Technology)." *Whitehot Magazine*. July 2014. <http://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/lev-preliminary-study-rsi-t/3014>

Hughes, Shara. "Studio Visit: Budd Dees." *BurnAway*. May 16, 2014. http://burnaway.org/studio-visit-budd-dees/?utm_source=BURNAWAY+List&utm_campaign=942bf2f5ce-WeeklyNewsletter4%3A+6-20-2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2908907202-942bf2f5ce-407640321

Ott, Jaenell. "Exciting Exhibition Comes to West Michigan from Brooklyn." *ArtPrize*. July 11, 2014. <http://www.artprize.org/blog/exciting-exhibition-comes-to-west-michigan-from-brooklyn>

"Art from Brooklyn shows tech and human body." *WZZM13*. July 1, 2014. <http://www.wzzm13.com/story/news/local/grand-rapids-south/2014/07/01/art-brooklyn-tech-body/11894151/>

Irwin, Shelly. "Preliminary Study: RSI-t at Fire Barn Gallery." *WGVU, NPR*. June 30, 2014. <http://www.wgvu.org/wgvunews/audio/fplayer1.cfm?styid=27289>

Bailey-Boorsma, Joanne N. "ArtPrize director of exhibitions participates in multi-venue show." *MLive*. June 23, 2014. http://www.mlive.com/artprize/index.ssf/2014/06/artprize_director_of_exhibitions_participates_in_multi-venue_show.html

Champion, Brandon. "Art exhibit examining technology coming to Fire Barn Gallery, Muskegon Museum of Art." *MLive*. June 21, 2014. http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/muskegon/index.ssf/2014/06/art_exhibit_examining_technolo.html

ARTiculACTION Art Review, Interview, Spring 2013.

/PUBLICATIONS/

"Gregory Green talks to Budd Dees." *BurnAway*. November, 2014 <http://burnaway.org/interview/qa-gregory-green-talks-budd-dees/>

"Jered Sprecher's The Hollow that Echoes at Gallery Protocol, Gainesville, FL". *Art Papers*. Summer 2015.

/Other Relevant
Work/

2015 Artist Talk, Mercer University, Macon, GA.

Curator, *Long-distance Boyfriends and Other Virtual Optimisms*, Webber
Gallery, Ocala, FL.

2014 Artist Talk, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

/Other Service/

2015 Sponsor for Gay-Straight Alliance (student group).

2014-15 Sponsor for Digital Media Network (student group).

2010-11 Workshop leader and graphic designer for SPECTRUM (a trans rights
advocacy group).

2008 Videographer for *Overload* exhibition for ATHICA Gallery, Athens, GA.

/TEACHING/

Instructor of Digital Media (Fine Arts Department)
College of Central Florida, 2014 - Present

SU/15 Digital Photography
SP/15 Fundamentals of Interactive Design
SP/15 Digital Imaging
SP/15 Introduction to Digital Art
FA/14 Digital Video and Sounds
FA/14 Introduction to Digital Art

Adjunct Instructor of Art+Technology (School of Art+Art History)
University of Florida, 2014 & 2015

FA/14 Net.Art

Adjunct Instructor of Digital Media (Fine Arts Department)
College of Central Florida, 2014

SU/14 Digital Imaging
SP/14 Digital Video and Sounds
SP/14 Introduction to Digital Art

Graduate Instructor of Record (School of Art+Art History)
University of Florida, 2011-2013

SP/13 Time-Based Media
FA/12 Time-Based Media
SU/12 Workshop in Fundamental Technologies
SP/12 Digital Imaging
FA/11 Time-Based Media
SU/11 Workshop in Fundamental Technologies
SP/11 Workshop in Fundamental Technologies

/SKILLS/

Animation

stop-motion, tweening, animated gifs, keyframing

Digital Imaging

image correction, manipulation, compositing, text design, printing, formatting for web, multipage pdf layout

Interactivity

animated, net art, and screen-based interactions

Sound

sound booth, onsite recording, editing, sound installation

Video

lighting and shooting, appropriating footage from web and DVDs, screen recording, editing, data mashing, burning and designing playable dvds

Web Design

html and css, ftp and launching, exposure to experimental and professional design standards

/PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE/

imaging/text:

Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign

interactive/animation/web:

Flash, Blender, Processing, Dreamweaver, HTML/CSS, Cyberduck

video/sound:

Premiere Pro, After Effects, iMovie, Final Cut Pro (7 and X), Compressor, DVD Studio Pro, Toast, Pro Tools, Audacity, Garageband, Mpeg Streamclip, Quicktime, VLC

Give Us Our Daily Class Time: the Teaching Philosophy of Budd Dees

I often start my courses with a brainstorming exercise called 'Give Us Our Daily Cupcakes'*. As a class we create a list, as superfluous as we can, with no guidelines at all. Then I give these instructions:

Intuitively choose three words from the brainstorm list.

Think of a real problem in your life.

Use these three words to analyze your dilemma from a new perspective.

Example:

Words from brainstorm list: *Quentin Tarantino, bellybutton, billboard*

Problem: *I am having issues with my new roommate.*

Creative Analysis: *Remember in that Tarantino movie when Uma Thurman was buried alive? She had to reassess the space necessary for action in order to free herself. I will reassess my space. Think of the expansiveness of my bellybutton. Live there; it is an autonomous space for me alone. If it makes me feel better I can imagine intimate billboards on my stomach describing selfish urges. Or draw them there under my shirt. When I work out a compromise with my roommate, I'll remember this secret.*

Intuitively Choose

The absurdity of this exercise helps transform acceptable sites for ideation. This activity structures our relationship to artistic research and contemplation throughout the semester. So the first pedagogical push for our projects is one of expansiveness. Anything can be fodder for art making; as in improv comedy, the answer is always yes. The materials of 'New Media' and contemporary art reflect this need of receptivity and openness.

Think of a Real Problem in Your Life

The second is to find an idea's locality and intimacy. Artists speak from their own voices, to evaluate, with their own authorities, their lives and interactions. I find this exciting because it demands the activation of an identity and agency as an artist and thinker. External research is integral to this practice; but the point is to understand this research from one's own perspective to make use of it with sincerity.

Analyze Your Dilemma from a New Perspective

Even though the 'analysis' to the above problem is absurd, the third instruction is about returning to reality. It asks the brainstorm to be useful. It demands that young artists reconsider in a way that is outside of themselves. The way to this solution requires patience; it meanders. This final step encourages empathy by doing away with the need for efficiency and impatience. And empathy is the most important part.

I sometimes fail to maintain empathy as an artist and person, but experiencing playful and contemplative classroom time helps me, too.

* I first experienced 'Give Us Our Daily Cupcakes' in 2011 during Free University at the Civic Media Center, Gainesville, FL. Almah LaVon SecretNBold lead and created the exercise, during which she wore a single red forearm band with fringe.