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Lost Channels

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LOST CHANNELS

by

Josh Johnson

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Mo Neal

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LOST CHANNELS

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University of Nebraska, 2010

Adviser: Mo Neal

My current body of work derives from notions of an inward nature. Things that are difficult to put your finger on for very long are my focus. Sensations as obscure as the lump in the pit of your stomach or the itch in the back of your mind that turns sleep into a game, conditions that both stifle and propel an individual. These hazy passengers churn within, coating themselves with the residue of memories, concerns, desires and other intangible features of the body; waiting to be released from their internal home.

Through the process and repetition of working, these arcane entities reveal themselves like overturned stones in a plowed field. I allow these unnamed sensations to influence my formal considerations and impact the psychological tone of my sculptures. In most instances, I reference forms of the natural world and ordinary objects, but then blur their identities causing them to flicker between something recognizable and something alien. This approach enables me to work with the essential qualities of that which is faceless and abstract residing within myself.

Coupled with this direction is the motivation to employ conventional materials in an unconventional fashion. Materials that in their usual context are hidden from

sight or intended to be ignored, are made visible and prominent. In this case, I am working exclusively with pink polystyrene, expanding foam, and white glue.

Polystyrene foam is used as insulation in construction, lying buried, out of sight in the walls and ceilings of our homes. In most applications when operating in sculpture, it is covered with another material, creating mass and acting as an invisible core. Expanding foam has a similar existence, dwelling in cracks around industrial and domestic fixtures filling gaps and holes, not creating them. Likewise, white glue is commonly witnessed peering out from between the materials it holds in place and is rarely permitted to run and drip freely.

Together these materials, which are typically relegated to the darkness of interior spaces, are utilized for their inherent aesthetic and structural qualities while establishing a metaphor. Just as these materials are most often found within something, so too is the situation of the content. The resulting objects become manifestations of a twofold honesty, being true to materials and to myself.