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Spring 4-14-2011

Echoes

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Recommended Citation

Huffman, Justin, "Echoes" (2011). *CGU MFA Theses*. 24.

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Echoes

Play informs all aspects of my creativity. Through play I am able to explore the creative modes of imagination, intuitive improvisation, and free association. My artistic dialogue converges around the themes of nostalgia and memory. Working under the pretense of mimicry, absurdity, and the subversive I have focused my current exhibition, *Echoes*, around the objects of my youth. Those objects that I find to be both inspiring and complicated, toys!

For many the very mentioning of toys has the ability to shoot one through a proverbial time warp, linking both the present and past. Remembrances of play and discovery are forever attached to such objects of youth. Driven by my desire to articulate the intangible and elusive spaces of my memory, I have set forth to venture further into the complicated relationship that exists within the adult recollection and understanding of toys.

Spending much of my time collecting, searching, trading, and buying toys, I have become increasingly interested in the ideologies that were imbued within the toys of my youth. Even before the toy arrives in the hands of a wanting child, many steps have been taken by manufactures to dictate the value and function of that toy. In doing so they create a target market, which sustains a consumer culture, and a capitalistic system. They also perpetuate and indoctrinate youthful minds with contrived and manipulated concepts of gender roles, dummed down forms of creativity, and acceptable social values.

The toys of my childhood, the late 1980's, were not predominantly designed for open-ended play, and therefore didn't nurture the cognitive development that such play fosters. However, like many children I eventually broke free from the prescribed ideologies and began to construct my own narratives. In make-believe I was able to find a freedom to critique my social situation. Toys were the developmental tools to create alternative realities. It was through such subversive play that I was able to define my self-identity, and then once I felt I had it all figured out I allowed these memory objects to fade away into distance of my youth.

Striving to reconnect and locate the potential in toys once again, I have begun experimenting with the memory objects of my youth. Using such toys as G.I. Joe, He-Man, My Little Pony, and Care Bears. I have begun creating art that traverses the triumphs and tragedies of my understanding of contemporary human experience. I am interested in challenging the ideologies and rewriting the historical narratives presented by the manufacturers. I have sought to transform the value of these toys, and use them to construct an alternative understanding. Rather than simply being objects of youthful distraction, I am using toys as a tool to create a dialogue both in regards to the objects themselves and how they can be used to construct critical discourse within society and art. In my current show *Echoes*, I am presenting an exhibition that is part proposal and part critique.