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### dark inventory

Abdul Mazid

*Claremont Graduate University*

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Claremont Graduate University  
School of Arts and Humanities, Art Department

## **MFA THESIS PACKET**

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Abdul Mazid  
Thesis Paper: Absolute Vacillation

My practice incorporates a multi-disciplinary, conceptual framework to explore beyond the facades of modern global events to reveal the less tangible power structures and manipulations that surround us and dictate our underlying beliefs and behaviors. As if turning a mirror to world around me, I delve into underpinnings that subconsciously dictates how we are “guided” to live our lives, often under the pretense of ostensible freedoms.

By combining paradigms and disrupting the distinct division between binaries in ideologies, once definitive categories begin to blur and slip into one another. Through these actions, I am able to distort the boundaries between the established, acceptable, and the absurd. My intention is to create a space for critical thinking and to question the mechanisms that predicate human actions.

To achieve this effect I carefully select materials and mediums that carry heavy or multiple symbolic meanings. By layering and manipulating these objects I am able to examine the content imbedded within them. Through these means I can further explore manipulations on both a micro and macro scale within economic systems, financial markets (this includes unregulated art markets), and the more encompassing system of globalization.

The materials I commonly use include sports collectibles, glitter, razor wire, Middle Eastern rugs, patterned fabrics, paint, as well as, familial household materials and objects. Through these materials I investigate the structures associated with Eastern and Western ideology, idolatry, desire, valuation systems, perceptions of masculinity, violence, competition, and collections. The root of these investigations is based on concepts associated with seduction and desire. Often times a material with a brilliant finish will be paired with another material that consciously opposes it. This opposition creates a binary within the object that hopefully vacillates in the viewer’s mind between attraction and revulsion.

Rather than pinpointing a specific interpretation, I dig into my personal experiences to alter and layer these symbols with polarizing imagery. The combining of these materials creates a space of undiscovered possibility. I am interested in creating “what if” and “why” scenarios than guiding the viewer with strict rules or didactic rhetoric. Through these means I seek to navigate the “Third Space” as described by contemporary cultural theorist Homi Bhabha.

Within each piece and installation I want the viewer’s mind to vacillate between understanding the nature of each object and mystification of what might have been seen as a banal or commonplace object. By cultivating this wavering of thought, I am able to open up a liminal space for critical questioning and new discourse. Thus continuing the dialogue of other contemporary artists like David Hammons, Mona Hatoum, and Adel Abdessemed, while referencing works of art by previous post-modern artists.