



**Jonathan Anderson**

***Discourses: Selected Works 2003-2006***

I approach painting as a mode of thinking, a process of digesting and formulating my own worldview. The surface of each canvas is a site for the active and continual work of asserting, rejecting, revising, and reformulating an idea, a point of view, a way of thinking about the world. While art-making is in this sense personal, I earnestly believe in painting as a social act: it is my own contemporary culture that I engage in this grappling process.

The works currently on display represent a small sample from three larger bodies of work.

**Groundings:**

*Whatever Works*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 84" x 66"

*The Age of Doubt*, 2004, Oil and paper on canvas, 64" x 72"

Central to this current body of work is a question of 'grounding'. In these paintings, figures are digging, excavating, planting, uprooting, burying: their efforts are simultaneously focused toward and dependent upon the ground on which they stand. Yet, out of this situation there emerges a conflict, a tension between the represented figures and the soil with which they interact. In each case, a ground is certainly present, yet its spatial location, its relationship to the figures, is in question. Where we would expect to see a representation of a ground plane, instead we see the literal 'ground' of the painting itself (the first layer of color that the artist builds the painting on). There is a double-bind: the figures are incongruous with the very thing upon which their efforts—in fact, their very existence as representations—are dependent.

In much contemporary thought, it is considered that we are ultimately unable to account for the 'ground' on which we stand. The argument goes that the ground of language cannot be articulated through language, the basis of thinking cannot be thought, reason cannot reasonably justify itself, etc. In short, our representations of the world—whether in language, image, or thought—cannot contain the basis of representation itself. For many people this implies a sense of groundlessness, a sense that meaning is an ultimately arbitrary human construction. However, I am far more interested in questioning the extent to which the opposite is the case: doesn't this issue of grounding actually imply a world that is far too dense, far too meaningful? Underneath the human mind and human language is a realm that is unspeakable and unmanageable; and perhaps this is our most fearfully sacred space.

**A Meditation on Noble Intentions:**

*Central Heating*, 2003, Oil on canvas, 72" x 125"

In his first state of the union address, on January 8, 1964, Lyndon Johnson waged the War on Poverty as part of his strategy for actualizing a "Great Society." In the decades since, trillions have been spent on anti-poverty programs and much debate has centered on the effectiveness and principles of such programs. Americans, in general, are convinced that caring for those in need and alleviating the effects of poverty are the responsibilities of any principled individual, but what effect does the legislation of bureaucratic programs have on communities and individuals? This body of work is a meditation on these poverty policies and the noble intentions that have fueled them. I do not question the goodness of these intentions or the benevolence of these efforts, but I do question the effects that even the best of intentions have brought about. While I presuppose that we each have a moral obligation toward fellow citizens who are in need, the driving question in this body of work is whether a federalized effort (well-intentioned as it may be) is appropriate for fulfilling this role, or whether it only further displaces and disables our sense of responsibility toward each other.

**A Meditation on Presence & Absence:**

*White on White (no.4)*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 35.5" x 24"

*White on White (no.5)*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 37" x 22.5"

*White on White (no.6)*, 2006, Oil on canvas, 40" x 27"

These paintings of empty shirts are traces, memories... they are portraits. I began painting them following the death of my uncle.





## Jeff Rau

### **Photos from the High Plains**

*Mile High Flea Market I (pans)*, 2004, Hand-printed C-print, 20" x 16" (framed)

*Mile High Flea Market II (watermelon)*, 2004, Hand-printed C-print, 20" x 16" (framed)

*Mile High Flea Market III (oranges)*, 2004, Hand-printed C-print, 20" x 16" (framed)

*Beecher Island Memorial Auditorium*, 2004, Hand-printed C-print, 20" x 16" (framed)

*Isolation (Yuma County, Colorado)*, 2004, Hand-printed C-print, 20" x 16" (framed)

I approach my work as a means of inquiry. To this end, I have found photography to be particularly useful for its mechanical ability to produce a record of whatever is placed before the lens; thus, I may conveniently select certain subjects for isolated study. But, it is not the individual subject matter that ultimately interests me. Rather, I am interested in how a collection of related subjects may give us insight to the systems that generated them (typically, social and urban/interurban systems). I also enjoy exploring how a change in context may cause us to re-consider the value of this systemic output.

Recent bodies of work in this vein include: *Shop Owners of Long Beach*, documenting local business owners within their related environments (and in retrospect, announcing their corporate plight); *Urban Textiles*, re-contextualizing the base infrastructure of our cities; and *Court Conflicts*, documenting (and thus memorializing) the outcome of common everyday battles played out in one-on-one court sports.

The work currently on display (*Photos from the High Plains*) strives to describe something meaningful about the vast region of the Midwest known as the High Plains. Just a few of the observations that may be drawn from this collection include: the vibrancy of agriculture, the quiet stillness of open space, a recurrent sense of atrophy, and the unassuming presence of complex histories.

## Kurt Matthew Simonson

### **Crash/Sink**

*Crash/Sink I*, 2006, Archival inkjet print, 17" x 30"

*Crash/Sink II* (in collaboration with Justin Craft), 2006, Archival inkjet print, 17" x 23"

I am oddly comfortable in the in-between spaces-- in the places where things may not always be what they first seem. There is tension when one acknowledges the realities of life, a sense of something that is "already but not yet," a sense that much of the truth of life may lie more in *both-and* rather than *either-or* situations.

My work explores the intersection and relationship between faith and art, particularly in exploring the role of the sacred in contemporary culture, and how it is located and/or revealed in the previously mentioned tension.

My *Driftwood* series uses the ancient act of pilgrimage as a central theme. We often lose sight of the idea of life as a journey- complete with ups, downs, pauses... stillness, motion, and the tension of the two. There are moments of connection and moments of distance- times when one is at home, and times when one is drifting elsewhere, looking for moments of revelation.

My most recent bodies of work explore the antithesis of *Driftwood* by rooting the work in relationships. The projects explore the lives and friendships of a group of high school students that I have been mentoring, in the interest of blurring the lines between art making, art education, and community involvement.

## Purchasing Information

For information on purchasing artwork please contact ((echo)) long beach at [info@echolb.org](mailto:info@echolb.org).





## Artist Biographies:

### **Jonathan Anderson, MFA**

[www.jonathan-anderson.com](http://www.jonathan-anderson.com)

Jonathan Anderson lives and works in Long Beach, CA. He has an MFA from California State University Long Beach and currently works as an Assistant Professor of Art at Biola University. In addition, he is the Curator of Contemporary Arts for ((Echo)) Long Beach, a local non-profit arts group that organizes exhibitions concerning issues of cultural renewal and restoration.

Anderson's paintings have been exhibited in galleries throughout Southern California, including the Museum of the Living Artist in San Diego; A Shenere Velt Gallery, SPACE Gallery, and Acuna-Hansen Gallery in Los Angeles; the Veritas Forum at UCLA; and Platform West Gallery and Viento y Agua Gallery in Long Beach. He has also exhibited at the Damah Gallery at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, UT and Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ. Anderson currently is represented by Gallery de Soto in downtown Los Angeles ([www.gallerydesoto.com](http://www.gallerydesoto.com)).

His work is included in several private collections, including that of Biola University and Rhyno Capital Management, LLC. He is the recipient of several awards and honors, including the Baker Foundation Scholarship and the Distinguished Achievement in Creative Activity Award for Drawing & Painting at California State University Long Beach.

### **Jeff Rau**

[www.jeffrau.com](http://www.jeffrau.com)

Jeff Rau lives and works in Long Beach. Having left a career in Structural Engineering to pursue the arts, Rau has been producing and exhibiting artwork for the past 5 years. He is also a co-founder and Vice President for *((echo)) long beach*, an arts non-profit that aims to activate community discussion on the contemporary arts and focuses on concepts of cultural renewal.

Rau's work is regularly exhibited in galleries of the greater Long Beach area, including the Anaheim Museum, BC Space in Laguna Beach, the Floating Wall Gallery at Cypress College, and Platform West Gallery in Long Beach.

He received a B.S. in Structural Engineering from Valparaiso University in 2000. Since leaving the engineering profession in 2003, Rau has studied photography and art history at Cypress College where he has completed numerous certificate programs, and received several scholarship awards.

### **Kurt Matthew Simonson, MFA**

[www.kurtsimonson.com](http://www.kurtsimonson.com)

Kurt Simonson (b. 1977 in St Paul, Minnesota) is an artist-educator who has taught at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Glen A. Wilson High School in Hacienda Heights, CA, and at Biola University in La Mirada, CA, where he is currently an Assistant Professor of darkroom and digital photography. Mr. Simonson is also the co-founder and a member of the board of directors for Echo Long Beach, a non-profit organization that is seeking community and cultural renewal in the city of Long Beach through contemporary arts, historical preservation, and arts education.

His work is regularly exhibited throughout the Southern California area, as well as having been recently featured in the exhibit "Space and Spirit" at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received a B.S. in Studio Art from Biola University in 2000, a Professional Clear Secondary Education Credential from Whittier College in 2003, and an M.F.A. in Photography from California State University, Long Beach, in 2006.

