

Artist Statement

In this latest series of collaborative images, we are investigating the dichotomy that exists between the natural systems that function within the world against the human systems, which attempt to modify, control, and improve upon these natural systems of order. The images investigate the underlying factors behind these conflicts, question the Western idea of progress, and examine the cause and effect relationships that these systems have upon one another. The images are influenced from anthropological writings, the history of technology and science, religious texts, philosophy, and direct observations. The work is created from varying mediums including: hand crafted charcoal and ink drawings, gouache painting, sculpture, digital film, and photographic reference.

Combining Media and Concept

The bird portraits contain a pen and ink drawing over a digital composite on fine art watercolor paper. Each “apparatus” element in the background instruction sheet is a Photoshop outline of a constructed sculpture. There are typically 30-60 outlines per instruction sheet page. These digital composites are printed first via Inkjet and then the pen and ink bird drawing is applied to the surface. Still images taken from digital bird videos were also included in the digital layout.

The purpose of the hand drawn image is to add a “human touch” to the rigid computer generated grid that functions as the background. Each pen and ink drawing is a redrawn replica of a mass distributed source image, which negates the “touch” and “observation from nature”. The function of each portrait is to show how the computer generated image and information is to be applied to the drawn subject.

The “nesting” images are a combination of drawing, painting, sculpture, and digital photography. In the initial steps of the process, the instruction sheets used for each bird portrait is printed on newsprint, ran through a paper shredder, and then papier-mache’d onto a wire frame. These sculptures are then photographed and digitally composited with the additional nature images. Once the composite is complete, the image is then printed, and the nature elements, such as leaves and flowers, are drawn or painted, scanned, placed back into the composite, and finally printed as an inkjet “photograph” on Hahnemuhle Museum Etching Inkjet paper.

Each nest is removed from its natural surroundings and placed in a blank composition, but hints at how it may have functioned within its’ original habitat. The nest becomes an example of the “unnatural” adaptation of information produced by the instruction sheet being released into a human environment. The nests do make reference to the portraits, historical ideas, and current events. For example, the third nest in the series was replicated after Vladimir Tatlin’s *The Monument to the Third International*, a symbol of Russia’s modernity after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. We all know how that one ended.