

Jargon Projects

Antidote

Graham Wiebe

October 7 – November 20, 2022

Jargon Projects is pleased to present *Antidote*, a solo exhibition by Canadian artist Graham Wiebe. This is Wiebe's first solo exhibition in the US, and his second presentation with the gallery.

For this exhibition Wiebe has produced works that engage the pervasive and ritualistic culture of self-help and wellness. Through both research and active participation in various practices, Wiebe addresses the appropriative pastiche that makes up much of the Western world's relationship with physical and spiritual health. While these approaches range from modern applications of ancient medical procedures such as acupuncture, to high-tech alternative therapies like sensory deprivation tanks, to newly imagined and absurd nutrition routines, Wiebe charts a consistent and almost desperate cultural pursuit towards well-being.

Beginning after a fire destroyed his studio and nearly all of its contents in 2019, Wiebe has been considering the dramatic ways in which nature conflicts with our plans for the future, and how we may recover from, adapt to, memorialize, and work to prevent these events from reoccurring. Earlier this year, in another stroke of misfortune, Wiebe's new studio flooded. These essentially opposite yet equally destructive events carried out by life's base elements caused Wiebe to double down on his investigations into methods of preventative care, personal protection, and self-realization.

Wiebe's photographic *Self Portrait (through the loss of my body except for my hand, I became the lens while the fluids develop me)* (2022) anchors the physical sensations present in many of the other works on view. Here we see the artist taking part in a 135 minute sensory deprivation float tank session. During his float — in a pitch black enclosure echoed by the photograph's mat and frame — Wiebe lost all sense of his own body apart from his right hand, tethered to reality only by his camera's shutter release bulb. After a while inside the tank, he began hallucinating grey and white psychedelic patterns reminiscent of the posters one finds in a college dorm room — comically standardized signs of drug-induced spiritual awakening.

At the end of his session Wiebe was awoken and brought back into being by the sound of rain sticks pumping through underwater speakers. His work *Re-animation* (2022) deconstructs these rain sticks and reorganizes their internal structures into a common acupuncture pattern used to treat overworked hands and other bodily ailments, and implemented regularly today for those with injuries

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resulting from intensive phone use. These thorns, now pierced directly into the gallery wall, trace the loose shape of Wiebe's only conscious body part during his float tank session.

The tank's claustrophobic and casket-like internal chamber triggered a panic response in Wiebe, as if he was being buried alive. Coincidentally, he recently completed a residency program sited directly next to a disused, turn-of-the-century coffin factory. In exploring this abandoned space over the course of the last month, Wiebe collected scraps of wood from the former factory floor and reinstalled them in the second room of the gallery, constructing a sort of mausoleum for physical and psychic transformation.

Situated within the slats of this re-purposed floor lays *HOW TO THINK FORWARD UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE PAST AND GROW SPIRITUALLY RICH* (2022), a work in which Wiebe composes a manifestation mantra using the covers of six unrelated self-help books. In cutting up and recombining sections of each publication to project an idealized future, Wiebe has also effectively rendered each individual book, and the now redacted and unintelligible text within them, useless. This amalgamation of disparate source material, manipulated to suit an individual's specific spiritual needs, acts as a secondary conceptual centerpiece to the exhibition.

Graham Wiebe (b. 1994, Winnipeg, MB) received his BFA at the University of Manitoba and his MFA at the University of Victoria. In 2015, Wiebe won the AIMIA AGO Scholarship Prize exhibiting a selection of work at the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto, ON) and has since exhibited locally and internationally in two-person and group exhibitions at BSMNT Gallery (Leipzig, DE), the plumb (Toronto, ON), Afternoon Projects (Vancouver, BC), Palazzo San Giuseppe (Polignano a Mare, IT), pleasewait. Gallery (Paris, FR), Blinkers (Winnipeg, MB) and The Living Art Museum (Reykjavik, IS). Wiebe has a forthcoming solo exhibition with Final Hot Desert (Great Basin Desert, UT).