

1999: From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: hello again
Date: Sat, Oct 2, 1999, 10:58 AM

I am still drawing - it's been such a strange evolution. My first attempts at working when I moved here did actually result in what I consider to be a project. Then I completed another less-defined yet thematically cohesive series. But for the last couple of years I have been working piece by piece in a way that seems to be more about assembling a collection of images than about illustrating a thesis. I have become much less interested in defining anything explicitly. I think perhaps I am understanding myself more and realizing a method of expression that goes back to grade school. This involves applying my hand to these found images, infusing them with an absurd amount of attention and attempting to evoke some kind of personal meaning out of them - even if the meaning is completely ambiguous and suggestive. I think there must be some control issues here. And out-of-control issues too. I often think of these drawings as portraits of banality as seen through the eyes of a stoned person in a stupor staring at a point on the wall. Yet many of the drawings contradict that interpretation. They attempt to articulate something, yet fail. And they are invested with so much labor that they can't be dismissed as trivia. They are like heroic stammers. They are eclectic in source and in execution. Some are completely abstracted interpretations of ephemera; others attempt to achieve "realism." The subject matter varies - it might be a pattern from fabric on a doll in the background of a photo, the space between people in a lecture hall where Michel Foucault was speaking, or a picture of trees from cartoon in a magazine. I was for a while only using marginalia, but lately have begun using anything that I think would be fun to draw or that would contribute something interesting to the collection. The result is an assemblage of images which attempt to define a quasi-narrative but can't really.

And for this I'm still paying off loans! I miss having projects about which I could state my case - there is something satisfying about that - but I am also pleased to create this other space where nothing is explicit. It's like creating a puzzle. But a puzzle implies a solution and in the case of my work, there is none.

How's that for being obtuse?!

2024: From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: hello again
Date: Sun, Mar 31, 2024, 11:22 AM

I've been looking through piles of folders containing scraps of images I've collected over the years. I've rifled through these papers so many times, they've become my familial photo album. Many have made the leap via pencil to paper, but a lot of these samples are still waiting for an entry into the material conversation. I can't toss them aside. The right time will come.

Looking at these scraps, I think about matchmaking. Like what if I throw a party of pictures, each discretely occupying space while speaking through proximity to its neighbor. And what if they don't keep their distance and start to intersect. What happens next?

Also, I took the knife to a folio of completed drawings. Each piece was the product of hours of devotion, each was my only love for the duration of its rendering. The cut-up fragments suggest their histories yet suggest a beyond, an incomplete narrative. I think some characters are most meaningful when they are incomplete. They retain some mystery, details fall away, the remaining fragments attract and attach. They have a conversation, hoping for an eavesdropper. It's getting interesting.

Random thoughts:

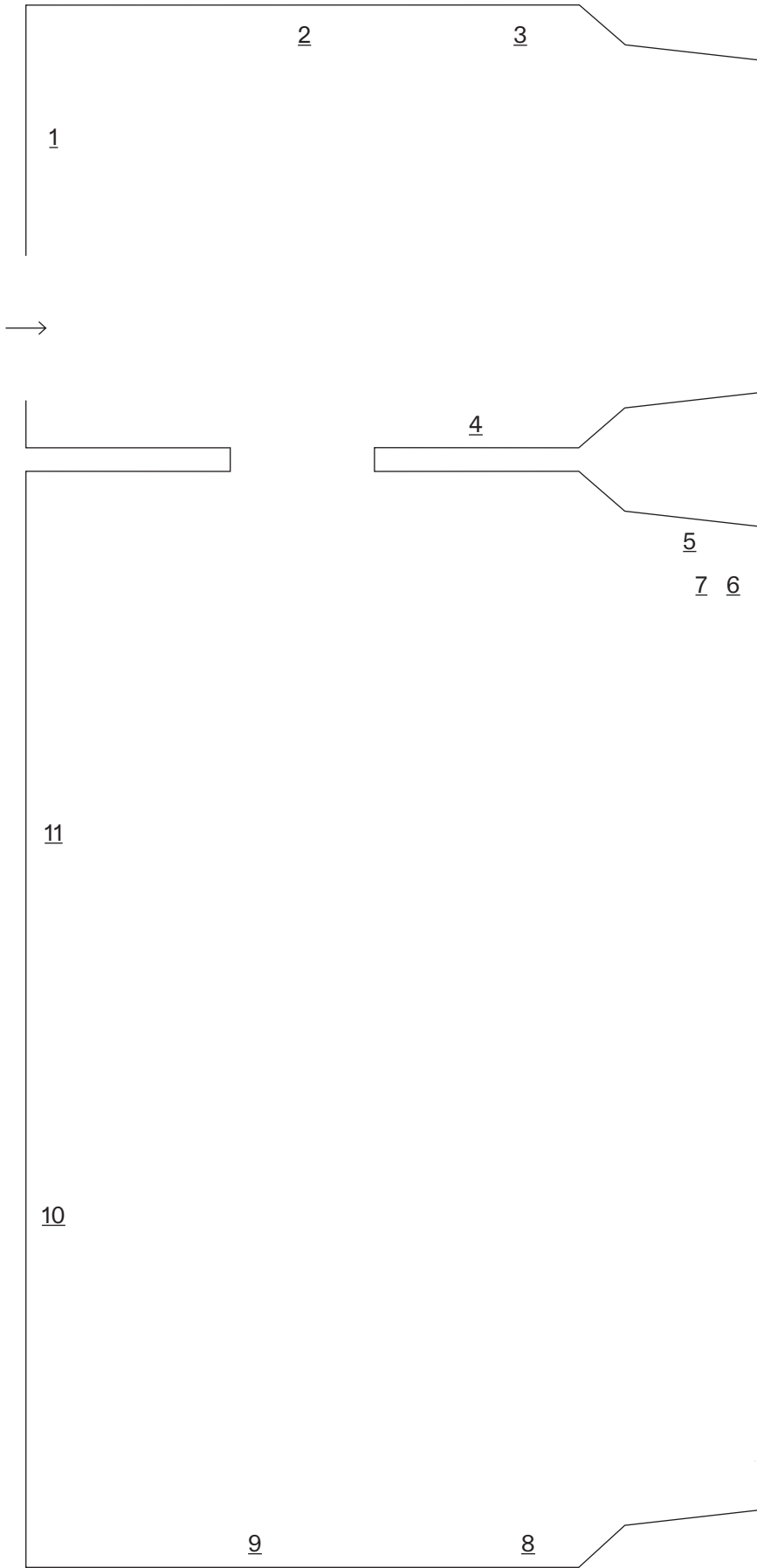
Scratched-out impressions, revised assertions, glance forward while the residue of past ideas linger ahead.

A mountain hovers above a scribble. A polka-dotted sky frames the peak. A vertical zip interrupts the landscape and shifts the dialogue outward, towards the viewer.

On a dark highway, an action figure attempts a sweeping gesture. Glanced through opaque portals, a narrative unfolds.

... more to follow.

Jerry Phillips
Phantom Redux
April 13-
June 8, 2024



1
Untitled, 2022
Graphite on paper
10 × 7.5 in

2
Untitled, 2024
Graphite on paper
9 × 8 in

3
Phantom Redux, 2023
Graphite on paper
18.875 × 13 in

4
Untitled, 2023
Graphite, gouache on paper
16.5 × 11 in

5
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
14 × 11 in

6
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
10.5 × 8.5 in

7
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
10 × 8 in

8
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
7 × 8 in

9
Untitled, 2024
Graphite on paper
20 × 18.5 in

10
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
23 × 20 in

11
Untitled, 2023
Graphite on paper
24.75 × 22.25 in

Jerry Phillips (b. 1958 Marshalltown, Iowa) lives and works in Little Rock, Arkansas. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *It Should Have Been the Happiest Moment of My Life* at Artists Space (New York), *maybe nothing was said/might be continued* at TOPS (Memphis), *Cultivate Your Garden* at Good Weather (North Little Rock), *Phantom* (following five previous solo exhibitions) at Feature Inc. (New York), *In Between the Lines* (with Raque Ford) at Good Weather (Little Rock), *Get A Simple Landscape* at Butler Center at Arkansas Studies Institute (Little Rock), and *Into Thin Air* at University of Arkansas, Little Rock (UALR), among others. His drawings are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), and Museum Overholland (Amsterdam), as well as in private collections in the United States and Europe. Phillips' work has been featured in group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco), The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs), Blondeau & Cie (Geneva), Feature Inc. (New York), Good Weather (Chicago), Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center (Buffalo), ACME. (Los Angeles), Fringe Projects (Miami), The Bedfellow's Club (Little Rock), MOCA Pacific Design Center (Los Angeles), and through Gallery Galerie Galería at Jack Barrett (New York). He received a BA from Florida State University (1980) and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts (1993). Forthcoming, he will represent Arkansas as part of the 2024 *Delta Triennial* at Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (Little Rock).