

ARTIST STATEMENT

Blake Harding

b. Tucson in 1988. Lives and works between New York City, Tucson and Johannesburg.

I am a multiform public visual practitioner and academic working in diverse written, spoken, performance, installation, media and publication forms. I seek to make the invisible and marginalized suddenly and inexplicably visible. I explore post-colonial, feminist and symbolic representations of the “self” and the “other(ed)” within liminalities, under scarcities and within the gaps between real and imaged. Particularly, I am interested in the gap between how individuals are represented by self and other, especially in media, symbols, space and materiality. In this context, I am interested to expand awareness and to reorient understanding of the circumstances of different individuals, groups and communities.

I often employ Irving Goffman’s dramaturgical constructions/spatial interactions and the language of Carl Jung’s affective landscapes and archetypally projected futures in my work. I consider how such symbolic systems and languages of knowing, being and understanding can and are subverted and how such subversion can lead to the unexpected and unknown. My work approaches Freudian repression, sublimation of self/other identities and considers the Marxist concepts of time and capital. I use the Foucauldian intersectionality of meaning making and power construction including ideas of state surveillance, control and subordination of agency, particularly in self and other(ed) representations. I combine multidisciplinary public art and participatory methods with a particular emphasis of transmateriality in a wide range of mediums. I seek to locate my work in spaces and places beyond traditional classifications and representations of experiences, mediums and forms.

The bulk of my current creative work concerns materiality, nostalgia, subversion, marginalization and space. I am interested as an anthropologist in meaning making and lived experience especially in the context of the political borders of Southern Africa and US-Mexico. I am working on a mixed media, performance and sculpture project exploring representation of

politically projected futures, inequality, scarcity and liminality in the context of the real, imagined and unknown. I am working on a long term participatory photographic project which seeks to empower migrants in Southern Africa and the US-Mexico border regions. I am writing a few books, articles and engaged in other creative production concerning my field-work in medical and social anthropology and practice as a clinical psychotherapist and activist. I have a tertiary interest in the built environment, industrial and digital computer aided design where I am prototyping and constructing experimental “shelters” based on my research on materiality, space, repetition and spatial representation of economies.