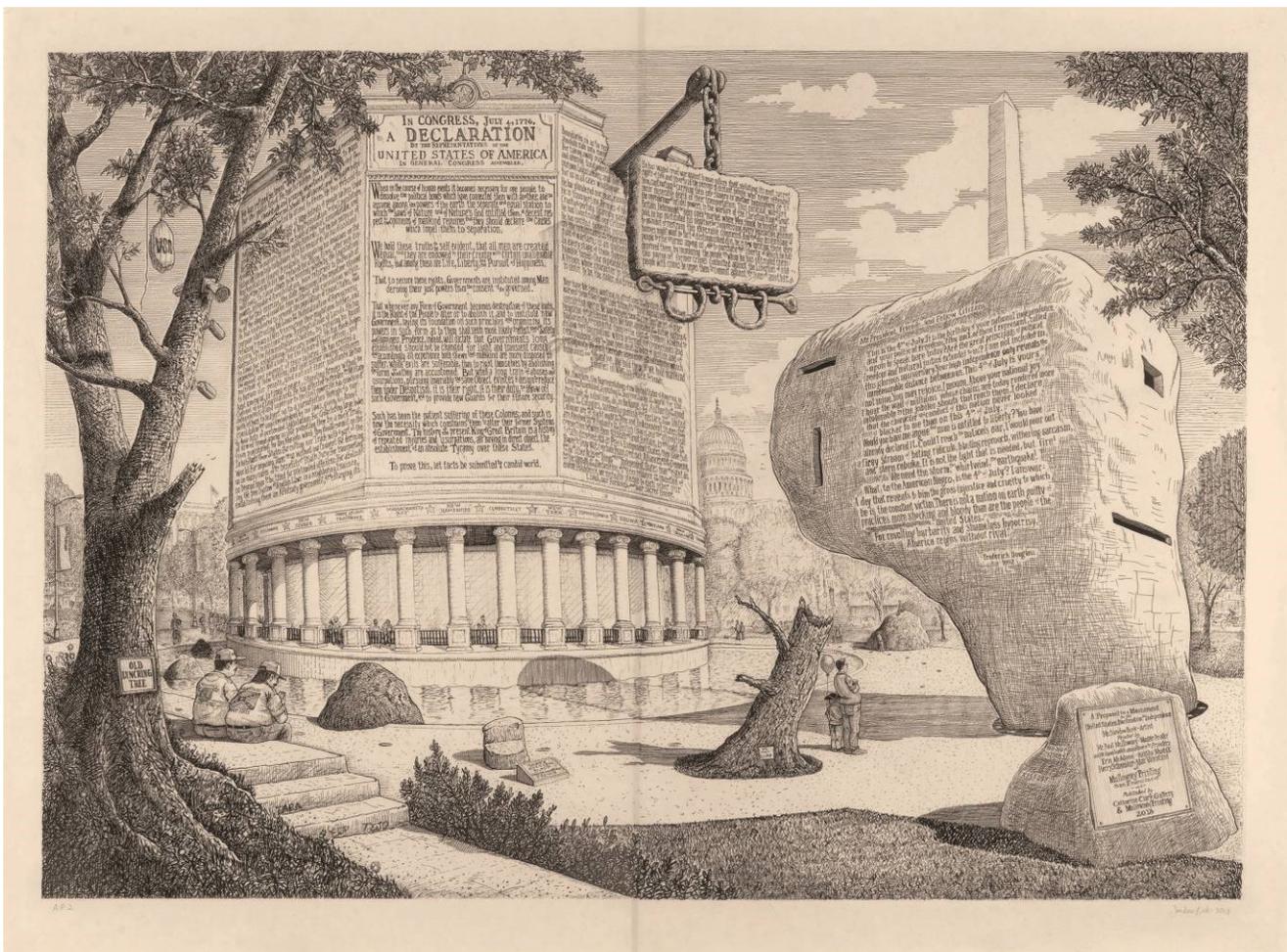


CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY

Sadow Birk | *Imaginary Monuments II*

Media Room: Rob Carter | *The Visitors*

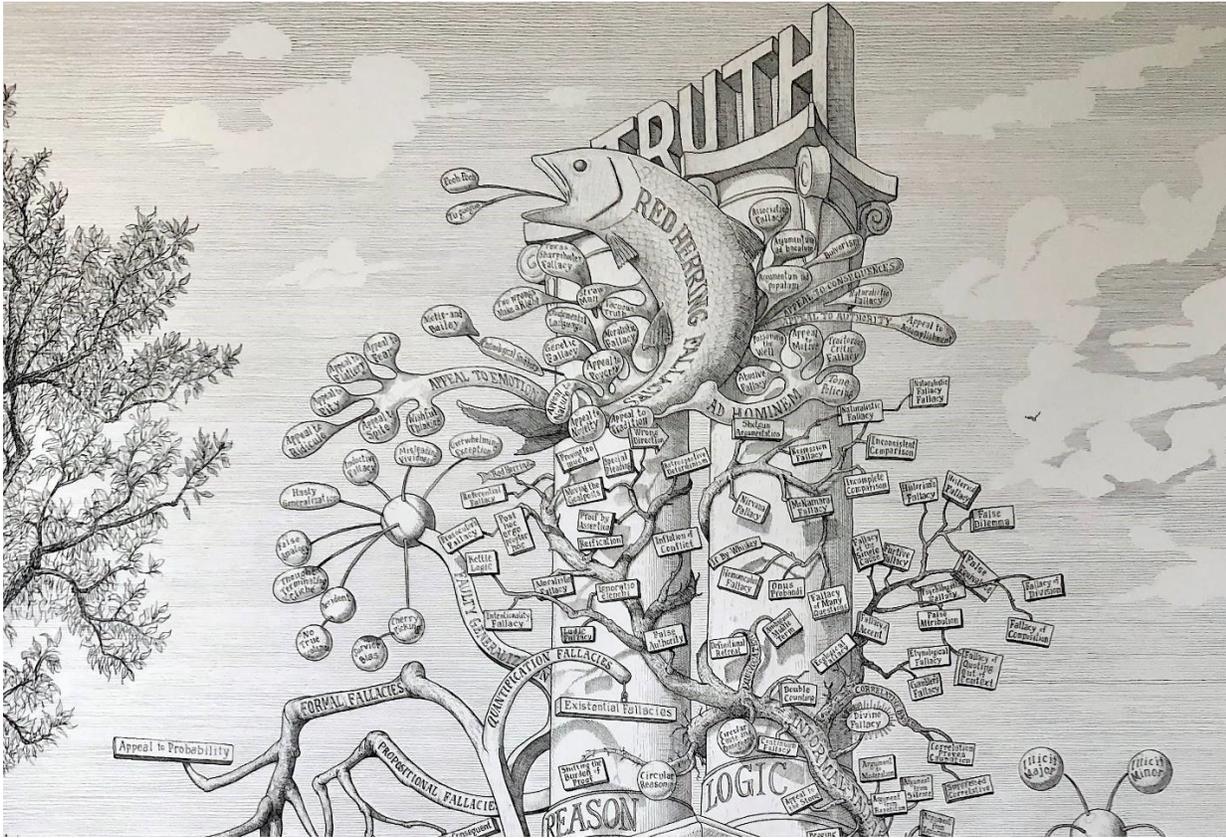
October 20, 2018 – January 5, 2019



Pictured: Sadow Birk, *Proposal for a Monument to the Declaration of Independence (and a Pavilion to Frederick Douglass)*, 2018. Direct gravure etching on two copper plates on two sheets of gampi paper, joined, and backed with sekishu kozo paper. Co-published by Mullowney Printing and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. Edition of 25 + 8 proofs, 44 x 61 inches unframed.

San Francisco, CA: Catharine Clark Gallery continues the Fall 2018 season with *Imaginary Monuments II*, a solo exhibition of new drawings and multiples by Sadow Birk, and a viewing room presentation of studies and woodblocks from *American Procession*, co-authored by Sadow Birk and Elyse Pignolet. Originally conceived in 2007, the “Imaginary Monuments” series depicts historical texts housed within proposed monuments that honor or enshrine the text’s topic. Most of the monuments incorporate multiple documents, conveying in words and images the complex and sometime conflicting histories and opinions behind subjects such as the judicial system, incarceration, economics, capitalism, trade, immigration, slavery, freedom of speech, treaties, governance, social justice and civil rights. Birk’s most recent drawings and multiples consider how we define our most basic social contracts, while also revealing the ontological disparities that underpin recent attacks on how we define “truth.”

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Pictured: Sandow Birk, detail from *Proposal for a Monument to Logical Fallacies*, 2018. Ink on paper; 60 x 42 inches.

Proposal for a Monument to Logical Fallacies (2018), for example, depicts twin columns to “REASON” and “LOGIC” entangled by branches and spokes inscribed with dozens of types of misbelief (such as “nirvana fallacy” and “existential fallacy”), with a massive “red herring” nearly obscuring a cornice to the “TRUTH.” By comparison, *Proposal for a Monument to Capital Punishment* (2018), which depicts an ominous watchtower overlooking monuments to instruments of execution such as a gas chamber and an electric chair, next to burning pyres to “revenge” and “systemic racism,” directly address particular and pervasive social and human rights concerns.

Imaginary Monuments II also marks the formal release of *Proposal for a Monument to the Declaration of Independence (and a Pavilion to Frederick Douglass)* (2018), the latest in a series of direct gravures co-published by Mullooney Printing and Catharine Clark Gallery. The gravure, like the Douglass speech it references, reflects on how freedom is unequally distributed to people of color. There are two structures represented in the image: one with the Declaration on Independence transcribed on a neo-classical building; the other with excerpts from *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?*, the popular title given to an untitled 1852 speech by Frederick Douglass represented by Birk as a text on the surface of a rock-like structure. A third text, originally penned by Thomas Jefferson for the first draft of the Declaration of Independence but later redacted, decries the slave trade as “execrable commerce” and is reproduced on a hanging panel, suspended atop shackles casting a shadow on the monument that bears the final version of the Declaration.

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Pictured: Left and right panels from Sandow Birk and Elyse Pignolet. *American Procession*, 2017. Woodcut from twenty carved plywood blocks. Hand-embellished with gold acrylic. Printed on gampi paper using a Dufa flatbed offset press. Sheets are joined and backed twice with sekishu kozo paper. Printed and published by Mullowney Printing, San Francisco. Three panels: edition of 6 plus 5 proofs; central panel: edition of 12 plus 8 proofs. Overall: 48 x 480 inches. Each side panel: 36 x 204 inches. Central panel (not pictured): 48 x 72 inches.

In conjunction with Birk's exhibition, Catharine Clark Gallery and Mullowney Printing also presents a special viewing room installation of *American Procession* (2017), a woodblock authored by Birk and partner Elyse Pignolet. The complete, monumentally-scaled work (48 x 480 inches) depicts figures from American history (pre-colonial to the present) marching toward a central image of a triumphal arch in disrepair and a replica of the US capitol that resembles a stage prop. Birk and Pignolet were inspired to create a woodcut of this scale after seeing the *Der Fürstenzug* (*Procession of Princes*) mural on the wall of the Stables Courtyard, Dresden Castle, Germany. The largest ceramic artwork in the world (331 feet wide), the mural depicts Saxon royalty of the House of Wetting (1127–1904). Originally conceptualized by Wilhelm Walther between 1871–1876, it was later rendered in porcelain from 1904–1907.

Using the scale, palette and composition of *Der Fürstenzug* as a point of departure for *American Procession*, Birk and Pignolet replace the royal figures with progressives (left panel) and conservatives (right panel), including many lesser known by the American public. Each group marches toward the central panel depicting an image of a landscape filled with scattered debris: a police car, the Liberty torch, portions of the Hollywood sign, an electric chair, a noose, a rural home and an old tire. In the viewing room, Catharine Clark Gallery presents an in-depth look at the making of *American Procession*, including preparatory drawings, the inked wood blocks, and individual panels presented as scrolls. At the opening, Mullowney, Birk and Pignolet will discuss their efforts to realize the monumental project. Mullowney Printing and Catharine Clark Gallery will also present *American Procession*, and all four "Imaginary Monuments" gravures, at the Editions/Artists' Book Fair in New York City, October 25 – 28, 2018 (details below).

Birk's exhibition is complemented by a media room presentation of Rob Carter's latest stop-motion video animation, *The Visitors* (2017), along with a series of related hand-worked collages. Compiled from postcards, photographs and video depicting the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, *The Visitors* employs historical and contemporary imagery as part of a continued investigation of how environments are physically and ecologically altered through tourism and globalization. In Carter's animation, the uneasy shifting between photographs in motion and stillness suggest a landscape that is in contact flux, and his use of historic and imagined materials chronicle a changing historical landscape, while also rendering possible future in which the land itself is forever changed by human impact. Join us for an opening reception with artist talks on Saturday, October 20 from 4 – 6pm.

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Pictured: Rob Carter, still from *The Visitors*, 2017. Four or single channel HD digital video, black-and-white and color, with sound. Edition of 8 + 2AP; 21 minutes.

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Upcoming Events:

Book Release and Signing with Masami Teraoka

In celebration of the publication of *Floating Realities: The Art of Masami Teraoka*, published by CSU Fullerton

December 15, 2018 | 3 – 5pm

2018 CCG Holiday Party and Benefit for Lava Mae and the Stanford Children's Hospital Mobile Adolescent Health Services/Teen Health Van Program

Featuring a sale of special benefit artworks donated by gallery artists

December 22, 2018 | 6:30 – 8:30pm, with remarks at 7:30pm

Catharine Clark Gallery will be closed for the holidays December 23, 2018 – January 1, 2019

Media inquiries contact Anton Stuebner | associate@cclarkgallery.com | Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Friday from 10:30am – 5:30pm | Saturday from 11am - 6p



SANDOW BIRK has been concerned with the politics of contemporary life since graduating from the Otis Art Institute in 1988. Invitations to participate in residencies have brought Birk (and his collaborator, Elyse Pignolet) to international destinations: Alila Villas; Soori, Bali, Indonesia; Auckland Print Studio, Auckland, New Zealand; Ballinglen Arts Foundation, County Mayo, Ireland; Cité International des Arts, Paris, France; Montalvo Arts Center, Los Gatos, California; and the Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico, among others. Birk has received prestigious awards and honors including an Honorary Fellowship in the Dante Society of America; a Fulbright Fellowship; a Getty Fellowship; a Guggenheim Fellowship; a National Endowment for the Arts Grant; an Artist Research Fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; and in 2014, he was named a United States Artist Knight Fellow.

Birk's work is represented in the collections of Art Gallery of Ontario, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, Crocker Art Museum, Crystal Bridges, di Rosa, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, J. Paul Getty Museum, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Laguna Art Museum, Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Historical Society, New York Public Library, Norton Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Societa Dantesca, and Städtisches Kunstmuseum.

Monographs on Birk's work have included *American Qur'an'* published by W.W. Norton (2015), which coincided with a travelling solo exhibition (with Pignolet's ceramics) to Orange County Museum of Art, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, the Sabeel Center and Texas Tech University; *Deprivities of War*, published by Grand Central Art Center (2007), and *Dante's Divine Comedy* (with Marcus Sanders), published by Chronicle Books (2004–2006), *Incarcerated: Visions of California in the 21st Century* and *In Smog and Thunder: Historical Works from the Great War of the Californias*, published by Last Gasp (2001 and 2000). All publications were accompanied by attendant exhibitions. In 2001, Birk began collaborating with Elyse Pignolet. Pignolet is an American with Filipino heritage, who attended California State University, San Francisco, and graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from California State University, Long Beach.

Birk has worked with Mullowney Printing since 2004, and has been represented by Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, since 1994. Catharine Clark Gallery has exhibited collaborative projects by Sandow Birk and Elyse Pignolet since 2008.



ROB CARTER creates multidisciplinary artworks which concern our contemporary understanding of the politics of nature and architecture through the lens of history. Installation, time-lapse and photographic works often reflect on environmental themes, chiefly historical developments in agricultural science and our perpetually unfolding relationship to the natural world. Past, present and future are visualized using stop-motion animations that focus on our relationship to city planning and architecture. Such videos simulate paths of urban expansion and deconstruct cultural and corporate practices such as tourism and sport.

Carter received his BFA from The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at Oxford University and later received an MFA in Studio Art from Hunter College in New York. He has shown his work internationally, with solo exhibitions at Art In General; Galeria Arnés y Ropke; and Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, among others. Carter's work has also been featured in group exhibitions at König Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; Centre Pompidou-Metz; and the Field Museum, among others.

Photo Credit:
Raymond Grubb

His videos have been selected for international festivals and screenings, including; Move Cine Arte in Venice, Sao Paulo and Paris (2017, 2018), In Light in Richmond, Virginia (2016), the 18th Japan Media Arts Festival in Tokyo (2015), PUMA Films4Peace (worldwide screenings (2013), the 8th Busan International Video Festival in Korea (2011), Festival NARRACJE in Gdansk, Poland, (2011), Oslo Screen Festival in Norway (2010), and the Creative Time/MTV collaboration *44½* in Times Square, New York (2010). Carter has been awarded residencies and fellowships at the McColl Center for Art+Innovation; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts; Vermont Studio Center; Saltonstall Arts Colony; Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace; Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation; and Omi International Arts Center in Ghent; In 2010 he was the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. Carter lives and works in Richmond, Virginia and has exhibited with Catharine Clark Gallery since 2015.