

NARRATIVES OF THE POSSIBLE



Joseph Lappie

Davenport, Iowa

The Artificer Arisen, The Artificer Fallen

“The archetype of ‘Engineer’ is a symbol for potential and ingenuity while also our collective failure to responsibly shepherd that potential.”

Do-si-do drum leaf; polymer letterpress, 60/40 cotton-flax handmade paper, beeswax.

(On exhibit but not pictured: *Singing Poorly* and *We may not fully understand, but what we do is this.*)

Artist's Statement

My work reflects the psyche and draws on narratives stretching centuries through wood block installations, prints, and artist's books. Pliny the Elder's descriptions of the inhabited world, the Nuremberg Chronicle, world mythology, and modern visual narratives, are among the sources for my artwork. The similarity in tales of gods, monsters, and humanity through our cultures are connective. These stories, passed down in written form or told in an oral tradition, lie at the root of ritualistic and personal belief.

Starting from a young age, I've consumed comic books. In addition to the adventures of modern mythological figures like Wonder Woman, the Sandman, or my pre-teen personal hero Roberto DaCosta (Sunspot) I'm fascinated with the manner in which these characters arcs are told: the clever marriage of words and images, strong graphics, and the sequential panels forming the

narrative. Storytelling is fundamental to the work. My bookwork relies on more common modes of communication: the tactility of paper + printmaking + text + image implies an immersive story for the reader.

Emotional and voyeuristic while exploring common themes of mortality, these books live in an ambiguous and often disturbing world. They are creations reflecting fears, doubts, deficiencies, and inner thoughts. By engaging universal allegories and individual experiences, I hope viewers consider the relationship between our private realities and the outside world.

Biography

Joseph Lappie is a professor and the chair of Art + Design at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. He teaches book arts, drawing, papermaking, & printmaking and serves the regional community in arts-based demonstrations. His work has been shown nationally and internationally including the Des Moines Art Center, Figge Art Museum, & Katzen Arts Center, with artist's books placed in special collections across the country including Yale, The Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Wisconsin. He received a BFA in Painting and a BFA in Graphic Design at Ball State University and an MFA in Interdisciplinary Book & Paper Arts from Columbia College Chicago.

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