

NARRATIVES OF THE POSSIBLE



Marnie Powers-Torrey ***Archive of Now***

Park City, Utah

“To the viewer: I invite you to trust your intuition and excavate meaning; consider the beauty of these objects and perhaps discover personal talismans...”

Letterpress (collagraphs) and typewriter; Niddegen Paper, binders' board, glue, rubber-based ink, found objects.

Artist's Statement

This series of boxes is a work in progress without a declared finish date. The paper wrappers for the boxes were printed as palimpsests in the process of printing another book project, *Roadside Attractions*. The plates are relief-printed collagraphs {roadside found objects mounted type high for letterpress}. Simultaneously printing projects from the same matrixes is a matter of efficiency—a necessity in our culture {the digital age} when my research relies on obsolete {slow} processes.

The roadside objects were sought like shells by a beachcomber during walks of all sorts—meditative, hurried, purposeful, lackluster—all otherwise uneventful. Initially, I had no intended plan for this rubbish. I was compelled to pick up the pieces and save them like prizes. These found pieces of the industrialized puzzle were mysteriously captivating to me, not being particularly mechanically minded. I had no recollection of many of these scraps of things—what their initial

purpose was. Others, I recognized after considering for a time, and some immediately knew. All are realizations of human beings' incredible and lasting ingenuity.

At the same time {for the past few years and now}, I began collecting sage root balls after the county cleared a new cross-country ski track and hiking trails in the open space near my home. I am enthralled with the new trails and walk them nearly every day. Still, I'm disturbed by the disruption, the annihilation of this slow-growing and remarkably hearty desert dweller. Sage is long-living—an icon of wisdom and progenitor of healing. Sagebrush's dry wit is also a fuel source for wildfires. These root junctures are thus both castaways and wellsprings, harbingers and scepters.

I've always collected things, since I was very young. First rocks and then pottery shards. Also, erasers and soaps. The calling to gather, to preserve, and to keep has stayed with me. The driftwood, bones, rocks, and other organic souvenirs are memorialized and archived in these boxes. Presenting the found natural objects in this manner allows us to refocus on the micro, to recontextualize the beauty of these nothings that would otherwise continue to decay in the natural environment. The still beauty of nature's readymades is engulfed by the bits of manmade machinery meant for motion. Each naturally occurring object gains an aura, surrounded by the impressions taken from objects shaped of raw materials by man. Both nature's and human's byproducts are talismans to hold tightly into the uncertain future.

Some boxes hold typed text while others are purely visual. The text are serendipitous meditations—translations that come to mind as I handle and contain each object. I am reticent to include text in all boxes as I'd like to invite the viewer to discover personal effigies. I hope the text that I do include provides permission to follow visual intuition when looking and excavating meaning. I ask the viewer to appreciate the beauty of these objects for what they are while also imagining what their shapes and presence suggest.

Biography

Marnie Powers-Torrey holds an MFA in Photography from the University of Utah and a BA in English and Philosophy from the Boston College Honors Program. Marnie is an Associate Librarian at the Marriott Library where she serves as Director of the Book Arts Program & Red Butte Press, offering academic and community outreach opportunities to the university and greater communities. She is the faculty mentor for book arts designations and teaches letterpress, bookmaking, artists' books, and other courses for the Book Arts Program and elsewhere. Marnie identifies primarily as a book artist, and her book work is held in collections nationally.

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