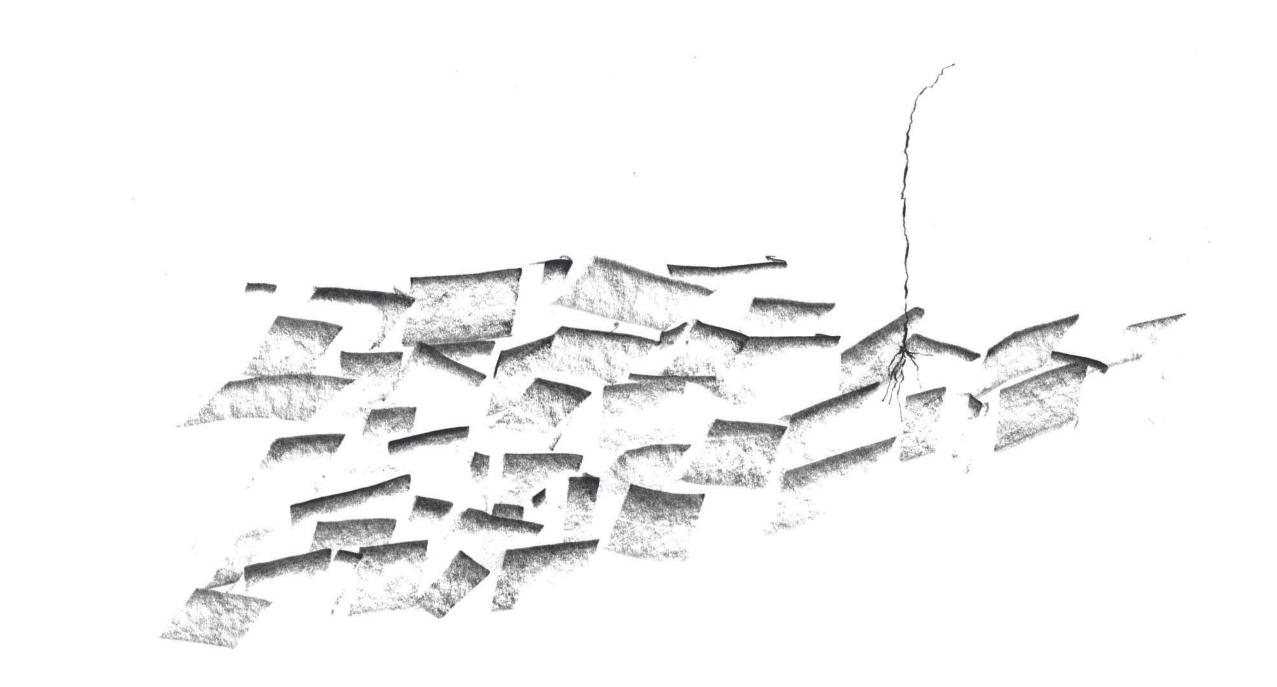


Accretion 3, 2021 drawing by Benn Colker

Jack Larimore | sculpture



Earlier this year, I met a tree that's older than the United States of America. Traveling with my husband in South Carolina, we were exploring the Sweet Grass Basket corridor on Highway 17, and decided to drive to Johns Island, Southwest of Charleston. A very old tree lives there, protected by employees of Charleston County's Department of Parks and Recreation. Everyone we saw there followed the rules, of which there were a few. We wore masks to protect one another from COVID-19, and children of all ages resisted the mighty urge to climb it. Its branches swoop down and touch the ground, then curve up again, like the arc of a bouncing ball. Its canopy is massive, filtering the sunlight like lace, and the air is appreciably cooler in its shade. It might be five centuries old or more. It's older than the colony of South Carolina, possibly older than the New World, or even the idea of a New World. To locals, it's known as the Angel Oak. Visitors to the Oak sometimes say that it reminds them of a fairy tail; there's something about the mossy quiet of the place that's transporting, and a little magical. But more than the "fairy," it's the "tale," because the tree, like all trees, tells a story. It is, after all, an angel.

Jack Larimore's work *Seven* is inspired in part by the curious preponderance of the number seven in faith traditions and folklore all over the world. There are seven deadly sins, and seven virtues to set you right. Seven Pleiades glowing in the sky, seven chakras, seven days to mark time. Seven colors of light, according to Sir Isaac Newton. And according to some early Jewish texts, seven archangels: Barachiel, Gabriel, Jophiel, Michael, Raphael, Selaphiel, and Uriel. In English, we use the word "angel" to describe someone who's extraordinarily good, who's helpful without being summoned. An angel is a person who makes things right, gets things done, goes out of their way to be kind, or cleans the house within an inch of its very life. We inherit the word from Hebrew, by way of the Ancient Greek *angelos*, and in its original form, it means something very particular: *messenger*. Angels are the intermediaries between the human world and the divine. When they appear, it's because there's news, though humans who get the message may not understand it.

When artists work with wood, they're fitting elements of nature's texts into new works of nonfiction. Trees record the events of their lives while they stand, and send us messages from their time once they're felled. When we live with wooden furniture, or cook with wooden spoons, we touch their recorded history over and over without necessarily understanding what we're encountering, and what memories may be passing through our hands. The works in this exhibition each hold two stories: the recorded history intrinsic to the materials from which they've been made, and the message of Larimore's vision, the two together forming a new tale. Taken as a group, they ask us a series of questions: am I safely contained, or am I trapped? Is anyone seeing this, or will it be ignored? Will I be remembered, or forgotten? Will our planet be safe for us in the future, or won't it?

The sculpture "Re-Pair" resembles two chairs set in a conversational group. Made in Oregon, where the timber industry has shaped the economy and the landscape for good and for ill, this work incorporates an old growth Douglas Fir and pieces of a 4 x 4—each evocative symbols and relics of the lumber business. Formed as they

are into seats that don't look especially inviting to sit on, this piece invites us to have, or at least consider, a conversation we might rather avoid about the tension between industry, livelihoods, and life itself in the natural world. Likewise, with "Trial," two hefty pieces of wood face off against one another, one charred, the other unblemished. A chain hangs between the two, and small cutouts (one rectangular, one circular) tell us that there are different ways to see the object of conversation from different sides, even as the volume and form of each piece of wood seem very alike. And in "Sycamore Story", a hollowed out sycamore, which Larimore found dead on arrival, is bestowed with new life, paired with a blackened form and a cluster of delicate branches. Formerly rotted out, he has smoothed its interior—an impossibly delicate task when dry wood is involved—leaving behind only the shell, and an implied story where a robust tree once was.

We're encouraged to peer into a tunnel in "Portal," to consider where memories and dreams might live. Are they somewhere far away that we cannot see, or remember? In a physical place, or indexed ephemerally, in the mind? Though memories seem permanent, research has shown that our memories evove over time, and we don't remember experiences—even indelible ones—as crisply as we believe, or exactly the same way each time. Small details vanish, others migrate from similar experiences, and our feelings about a memory can change as we mature. Is it still in there? Look hard.

In "Femina," we've been invited to a wedding of sorts, but the bride is partially hidden from view by a lattice-work scrim. Is she protected, or trapped? Everyone can see her. But do we see her clearly? The presence of a dress without a bride emphasizes the scaffolding of tradition and ceremony that surrounds weddings, and indeed the wedding industrial complex, with its attendant economies of flowers, food, photography, and musical accompaniment.

By now you may have an acute sense that you're being watched. And you are: there seven of them, forming a half circle at the far end of the gallery, perched in surveillance. Or perhaps protection. Are they menacing? Just keeping an eye on things? Metal tools combined with elaborate roots tell us of their connection to the earth. They seem to belong here. Larimore writes of this piece, entitled "Seven": "As individuals we bear witness individually. Does shared experience as witnesses inform our ethos? Our truth? Our humanity?" Do we all see the same thing when we look? Clearly not, or we wouldn't be so polarized on the land of the country we share, whose history we contest, tug at, and pull apart. Are they angels? In a certain literal sense they must be, because they come bearing a message: don't look away.



-Sarah Archer

The work that I have made together with my journaling bears witness to the importance of exploring my ongoing mediation between intuition and reason. Certainly, dualisms like this are a persistent part of our lives but what interests me in this construct is the mediation experience. Through the window of my studio work I look for an understanding of the effect this mediation has on me.

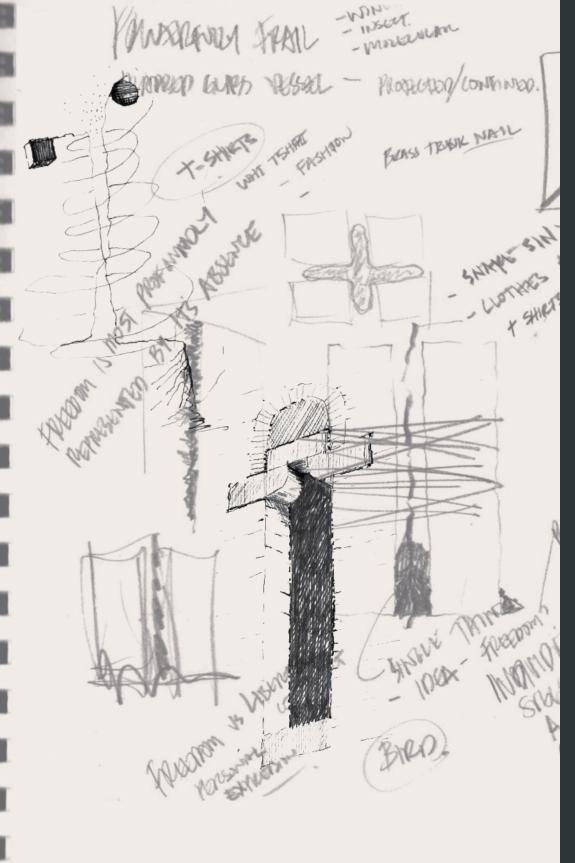
My naturalist self observes a fluid less binary world that encourages my intuitive side and presents a deeply satisfying feeling of completeness. Complete yet full of mysteries and complexities. Crispin Sartwell proposes that the shared sense of the beautiful is evidence of a longing for this sense of completeness, for the sublime. My studio work is a conduit for insights into this beauty and sublimity and I find the best results come through an organic process, an unscripted exchange between accretion and deletion.

In balance with this impulsive process my maker self is consumed with reasoning through the choosing of materials, making connections, considering surfaces and obsessing over details. Most of my studio time is spent making, however there is always a rich conversation between the conceptualizing and the making.

My bliss then is finding a sweet balance between head and heart and experiencing the attendant personal growth. Making the piece titled "Trial" was particularly blissful. I discovered a more expansive concept of a trial. Trials in the legal construct tend to be zero-sum events, a distillation into either positive or negative components, a binary system. In making this piece I explored the contrast between this trial as judgement and a trial as a strengthening experience like positive self-criticism or peer criticism where the depth of the experience is fueled by a desire, to reach, to stretch, to challenge, etc. I still do not fully understand what this piece is about, but I am thankful for where it has taken me. It has become clear that the piece has taken on the "seeing eye" thing for me which has a strange correlation to The Great Seal that is on a one dollar bill. The pyramid with the all-seeing eye. The "Eye of God", or the "Eye of Providence". Is it my eye, the eye of the other or both?

"re-pair" is a piece I made in Oregon. Oregon embraced me and focused me on an interesting contradiction particular to this region that relates to my work. The Northwest is a mecca for contemporary alternative lifestyle that values earth stewardship which stands in sharp contrast to a long history of clear cut logging and commercial timber production that's been devastating to the environment and habitats. The new Portland was familial to me, it felt comfortable. I was compelled to explore the relationship of this new culture to that of the old Portland and how that disconnect related to my own experience as someone who relies on trees to make my work. The romance of timbering is chilled by the realities of the clear-cut. In the presence of an old growth Doulas Fir, a 2 X 4 takes on a different value. My affinity for wood as a medium is invigorated by the life that a tree represents, logging then is an inconvenient truth that I do not often confront. This piece is for me a conversation about reparation.

-Jack Larimore, September 2021



Am I one thing?

Not always.

There are those incongruities...
Interior incongruities.

Proud...Humble

Distant...Present

Satisfied...Longing

Powerful...Fragile

Doubtful...Certain

Thinking...Doing

Balancing am I... always

... A person who had never listened to nor read a tale or myth or parable or story, would remain ignorant of his own emotional and spiritual heights and depths, would not know quite fully what it is to be human. For the story—from Rumpelstiltskin to War and Peace—is one of the basic tools invented by the mind of man, for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.

- Ursula K. Le Guin, The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction (1979)<sup>1</sup> The dialectical role of the sublime in art is as old as the trope of the tormented artist. The Romantics, for example, occupied with emotion and individualism, posited nature as a representation of the sublime. A symbol for "boundlessness" invoking the ineffable character of greatness, in the words of Immanuel Kant², the concept gave nineteenth-century artists and philosophers a device for coping (or not coping) with the realities of a machinated future, void of the kind of wonder they sought. The painter Caspar David Friedrich famously posed himself against the frightening majesty of the universe—limitless and ineffable.

Jack Larimore created the sculptural installation work in this exhibition during a time of frightening ineffability. A trained landscape architect, Larimore has also led a long practice as a sculptor noted for his work in the material of wood, making unique forms of hardwoods and found materials that are often whimsical and clever, or introspective and accompanied by poetry and personal observations. The work beckons reflection, slow observation, and appreciation for materials that breathe their own histories into the works they eventually become.

The global COVID-19 pandemic pushed many artists into isolation. For Larimore, who makes his home in a rural area surrounded by farmland, this sudden quiet inspired a body of work focused on gaining a deeper understanding of time and the natural world. Though the resulting works each represent a standalone narrative, observation, or rite, a contemplation of a more cosmic sense of existence connects them.

Much of contemporary thought frames our understanding of the world through our opposition to it.

We place ourselves inside or outside spaces, contexts, and communities; see the labor of humankind as a way of protecting ourselves from nature; and tame the sublime world with boundaries to create beauty.

Our stories help us make sense of our awkward place in an unpredictable world, domesticating the unknown with rituals, myths, and moralizing fables.

Dualities such as "difficult and easy," "long and short... high and low... back and front" concretize human experience and establish a logic and rhythm for us to occupy. With all our power of invention (flight, space travel, vaccines!), humans are such vulnerable, fragile creatures.

Each of these works invites immersive engagement. Many have clearly articulated points of entrance and egress—a ladder, a crevasse, a portal—and all seem to be scaled to the human body and the way it occupies and moves through space. One, titled *Longing Log*, seems to offer itself as a bench, but it isn't existentially dependent on this subservience. Instead, it initiates a conversation echoed by each of the seven installations on view in the exhibition—one engaged in by the artist and his efforts to unravel the mysteries of the universe; not in search of answers, but as an act of understanding: existing *with*, not against.

Composed of two parts of a cedar trunk, cleaved along the grain and cross-stacked with one end resting upon the other, *Longing Log* seems to depict chance and resolution at once, an act of nature causing a tree to be struck down, resulting in a harmonious arrangement. It also offers the artist a way to enter the conversation: "I have found that while thinking about these things and longing for completeness, this log is a good place to sit." 4

Other works present tableaus that, while unfamiliar to our collective vocabulary of cultural practices, harken to forms of ritual and observance—rites that have united humankind from ancient times to the present. In *Femina*, an unembodied diaphanous dress hovers within a wooden enclosure that allows a small number of worshippers to encircle it. The dress appears ephemeral, illuminated from within; though somewhat transparent, it transcends the solidity of the materials that enclose it, imparting a dual sense of otherworldliness and earthiness that befits a protective goddess or deity. Similarly, *Seven*—a row of upright escorts that appear to be the spawn of tools and trees—hover nearby, providing protection or serving as supplicants. Both depict rituals we can't quite place and speak to the search for meaning in ancient symbols and amulets that provide guidance and protection in a twenty-first century existence that seems to be farther than ever from our animistic past, when we communed closely with nature in order to survive.

Our travels bring us to the post-industrial present, where *Trial* stands cleaved like *Longing Log*, but upright—two parts of the same tree, separated by a thin sliver of space disrupted by a heavy chain. *Trial* holds us accountable to 2020's calls for racial justice that remain unanswered. One cloven half is dark, the other light, and yet each bears scars that speak to the violent injustice that keeps them apart. This duality is the most raw in the discussion, figuratively and materially.

Wood gives artists the opportunity to bring centuries of history into their stories. The material bears its provenance for all to see, from pith to bark. Larimore wrote, "My affinity for wood as a medium is invigorated by the life that a tree represents." The stories that this gathering of works tell us are about being witnesses, about connecting, about finding strength and reverence within one and among many. They respond to experiences that are simultaneously singular and personal yet universal. They bear scars but they live, never knowing what's ahead but perhaps better understanding "what it is to be human."

—Jennifer-Navva Milliken, Artistic Director. Center for Art in Wood



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1979), p. 22.

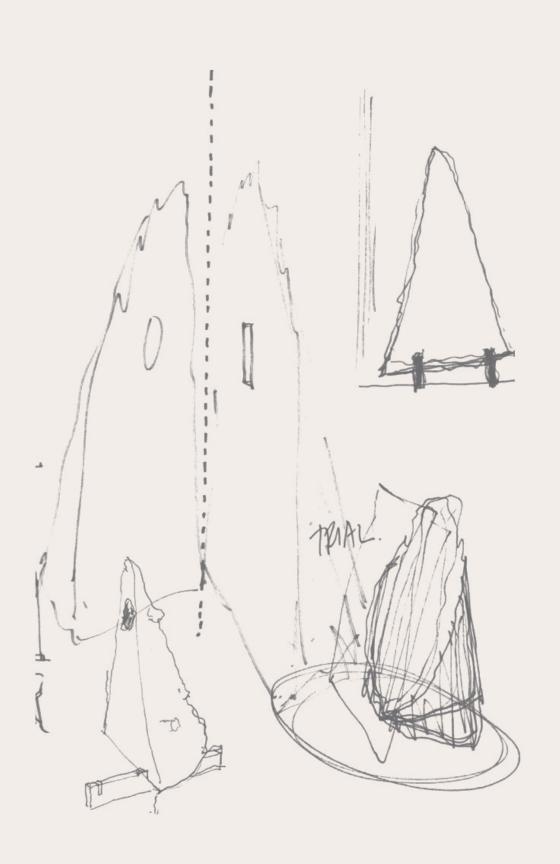
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Judgment (1790), trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1951), section 23, p. 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> From Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching (chapter 2), c. 6th c. BCE, guoted by the artist.

<sup>4</sup> In a statement by the artist.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In a statement by the artist dated April 27, 2021.





# TRIAL

Imposing judgement requires authority.
We, not as individuals but as community,
ask to be judged—we delegate judgement
and require absolutes—right/wrong—
yes/no—good/bad.

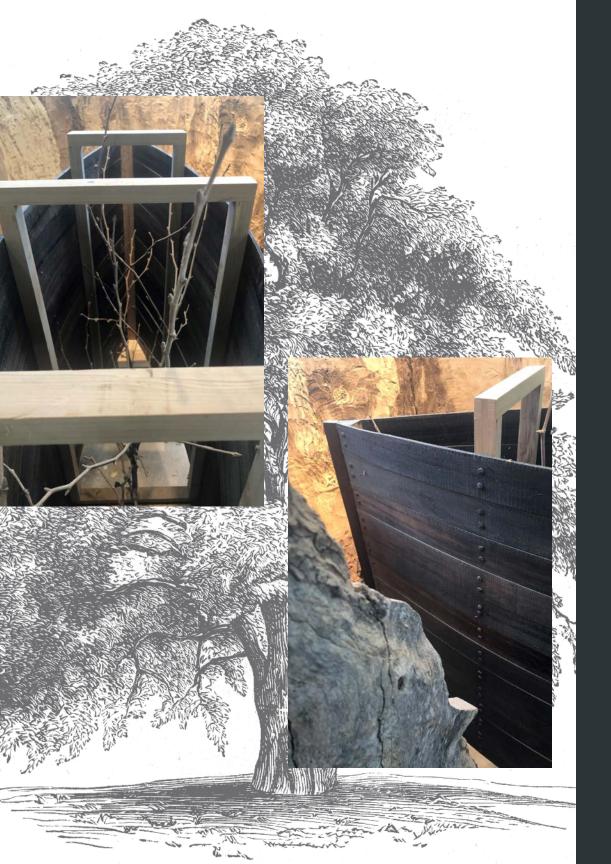
## It is abstract.

When I think back on the trials in my life, the most valuable of them were selfimposed challenges. These experiences affected growth without judgement.

Binary systems are limiting.

2021 48" x 28" x 78" h cedar, steel photograph by Myles Pettengill





# Sycamore Story

"So many questions remain unanswered.

Perhaps we are poorer for having lost a
possible explanation or richer for having
gained a mystery. But aren't both
possibilities equally intriguing?"

—Peter Wohlleben,

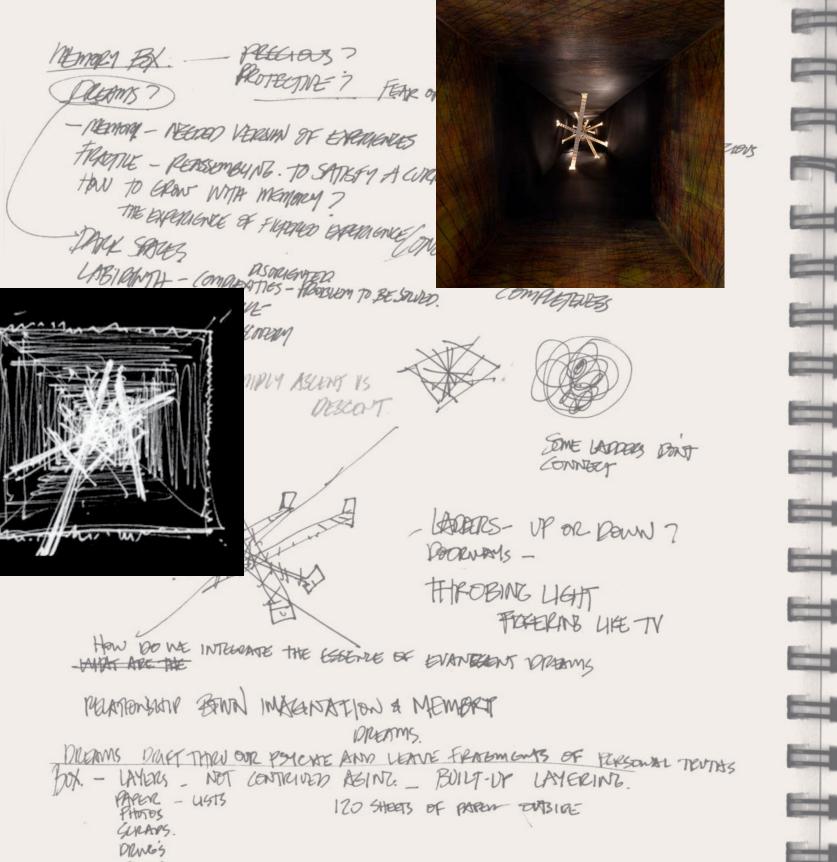
The Hidden Life of Trees

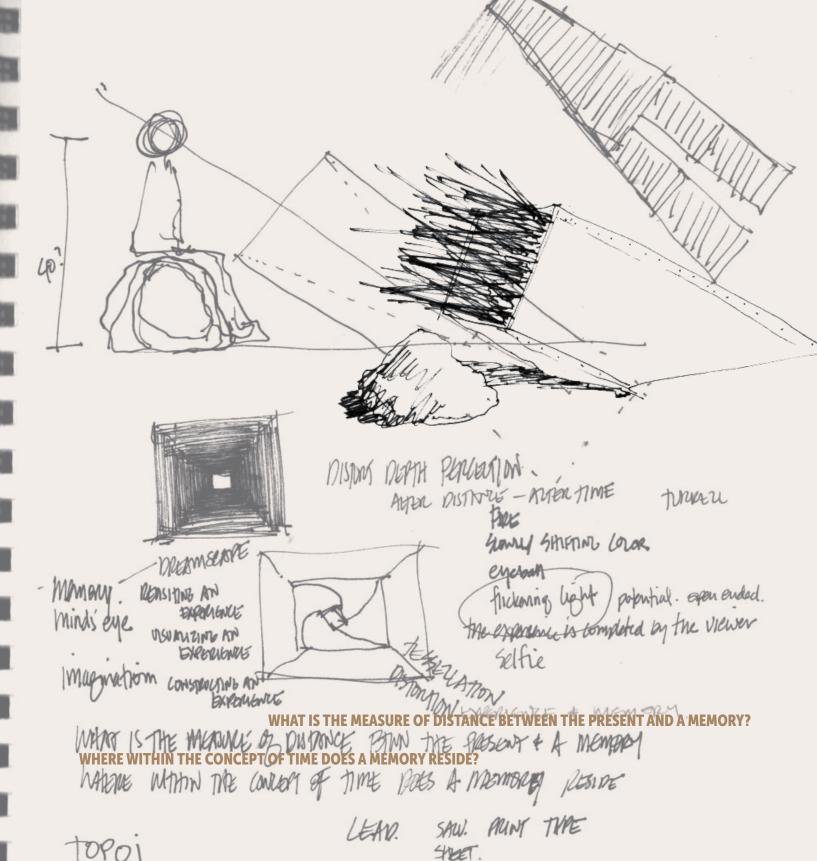
This Sycamore may have been planted in the 19th century. From its rooted home, across the road from our home, it has witnessed a lot. I do not get to know it's long story\_ but I am fortunate to be a small part of it.

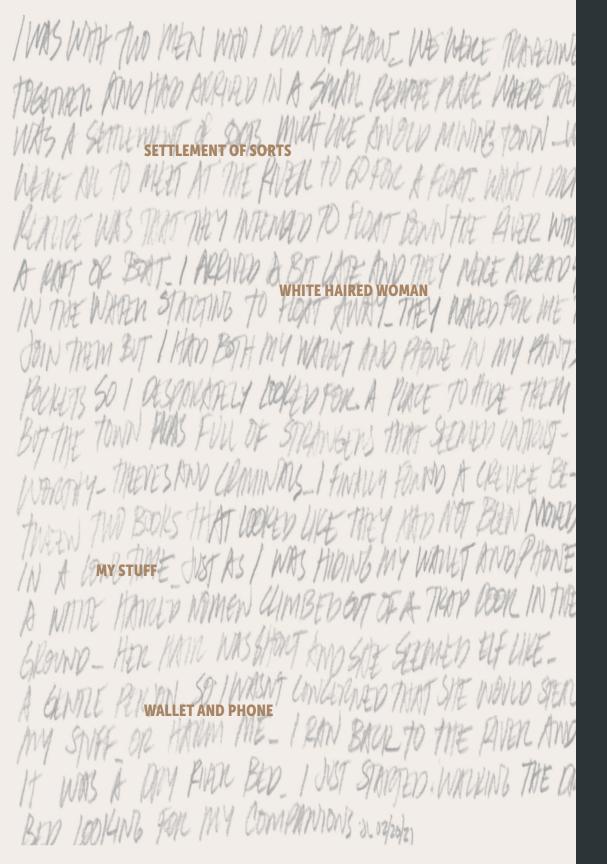
This magnificent perennial lives on...
de vita cycle platanus occidentalis

2021 68" x 67" x 40" h sycamore, cypress, pine tar, bronze photograph by Myles Pettengill









**PORTAL** 

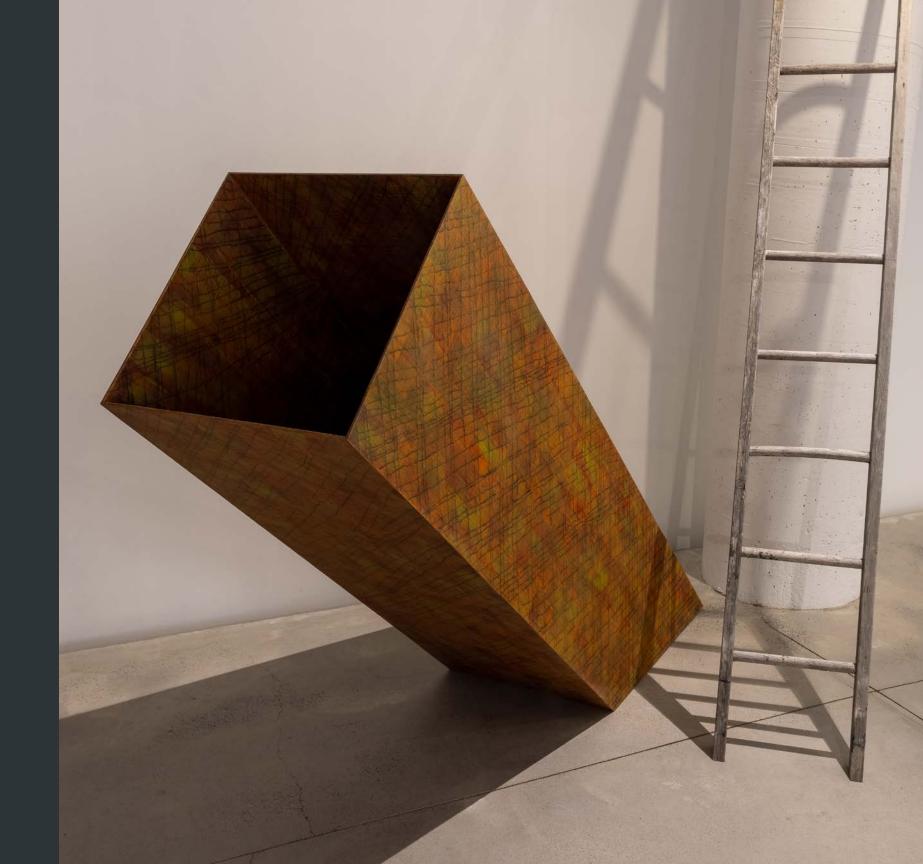
What is the measure of distance between the present and a memory?

Where within the construct of time does a memory reside?

Are dreams memories or are memories dreams?

I certainly don't know the answers for any of these questions and I am not really looking for answers but thinking about this stuff made me want to make this piece.

2021 108" x 60" x 108" h composition board, basswood, polychrome, wood ladder, LED lighting photograph by Myles Pettengill





## Longing

Crispin Sartwell proposes that the experience we refer to as beauty represents a shared longing for a sense of completeness, for the sublime.

This Cedar Log has much to say about beauty

"...Indeed the hidden and the manifest give birth to each other.

Difficult and easy compliment each other Long and short exhibit each other High and Low set measure to each other Voice and sound harmonize each other Back and front follow each other..."

—Tao Te Ching

Or as Tom Waits sees it

"...I never heard the melody til I needed the song..."

I have found that while thinking about these things and longing for completeness, this log is a good place to sit.

2021 120" x 72" x 20" h white cedar photograph by Myles Pettengill





life is work

building in layers
growing a home
finding light calming emotions music dancing in the kitchen
weeping joy as babies born cry
all the anguish all the joy

as we float
washing through water
we transform into sculpture we are melted metal
where I am both still and swirling
he is full of watery sketches unlike anything you ever imagined
raised effortlessly to all levels

all a part of him you me and us

and then there is the way he makes and the thought he gives to the world in his element he is the sculpture that comes to life as heavy and as wonderous as ours

he is our Jack Larimore

—Helen Pettengill

photograph by Myles Pettengill



Oculus

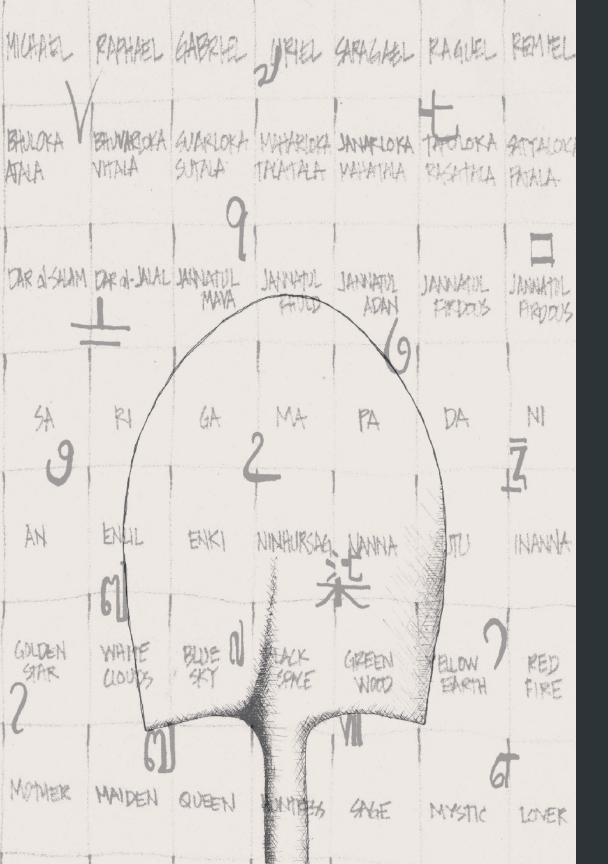
I wear classes when I take them them of I don't see as well, not as clearly. So maybe I'm not supposed to see clearly—am I missing something? Should my visual expenence be changing as I age? I removed my glasses to with this so I can't actually read the woods I'm writing which my hand knows what to de it can compensate. I low think mo of the bely as a team with each member working together with other members (I can't help thinking about seems from the morie: Everythimo You wanted to know about sex)

A sonsual experience requires the teamwork of the senses. I've looked at a lot of stuff so thankful that some of it live seen some of it live actually experienced.

2021 48" x 48" x 108" h longleaf pine timber, wireglass, steel, bronze, prism photograph by Myles Pettengill



Seven DIMENSIONS OF taoisa I deadly sine Michael anofes prole Golden Star greed whit clouds Gabriel Wath Dive Sky Dreel Black - cipty sprea Garagorel Green used Raquel. Remier red fine We often hear that love is bearing wittness. monding Is then, the act of bearing wittness an act of love? The Living Gods tresde wed In the broadest sense, by seeing one another with care, thus we open the possibility to find love for one another. Hindu - Saptak Sweras left behind on earth sa re ga ma pa dra ni as ancestresses of Seven promises to all maniand. Seven vivgn Boddesse dles menorah. sever chakras aliyahs - torah CUFF/SYNCHIE - ENGLANDMENTS Joseph eau-+ cans devolved - skinny comos en græn filkes red ME MASSING CATE : BUDDEST LATES OF SAURED enth worms overear. EARLY 13 A DETTY - A PROTECTION



Seven...each a witness

I am aware of beauty and ugliness every day.

Much of what I witness is beyond my reach,
and yet I am drawn to the experience –
I am affected by it – guided by it.

As individuals we bear witness individually.

Does our shared experience as witnesses inform our ethos?

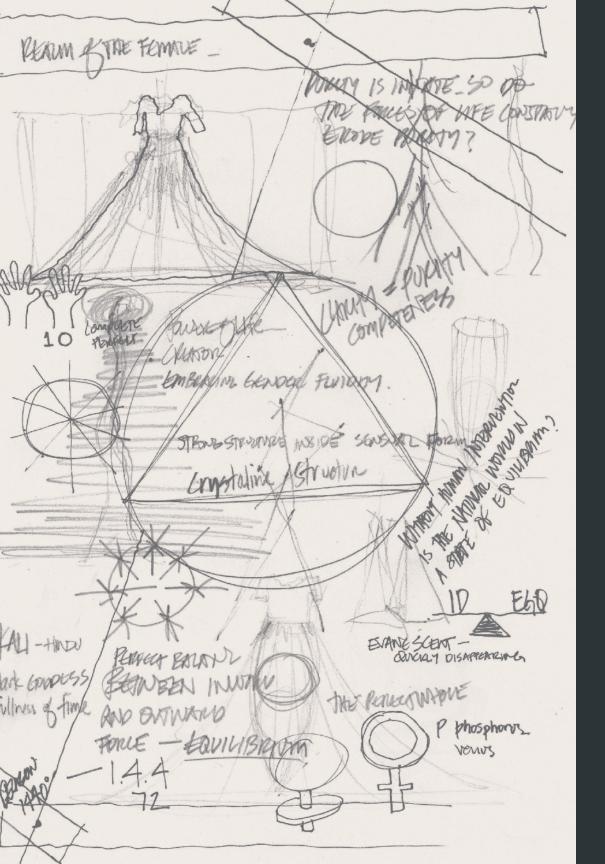
Our truth?

Our humanity?

I stand with these Seven and seek enlightenment.

2021 38" x 38" x 108" h ea. steel, bronze, linden branch photograph by Myles Pettengill





#### **FEMINA**

mother

maiden

queen

huntress

sage

mystic

lover

## SHE TRANSENDS

When I started thinking about this piece, I wasn't at all certain what it was about. It seemed at the time like it was going to be about abasement. The experience of making has expanded me—I now think of this piece as a shrine that I am honored to share.

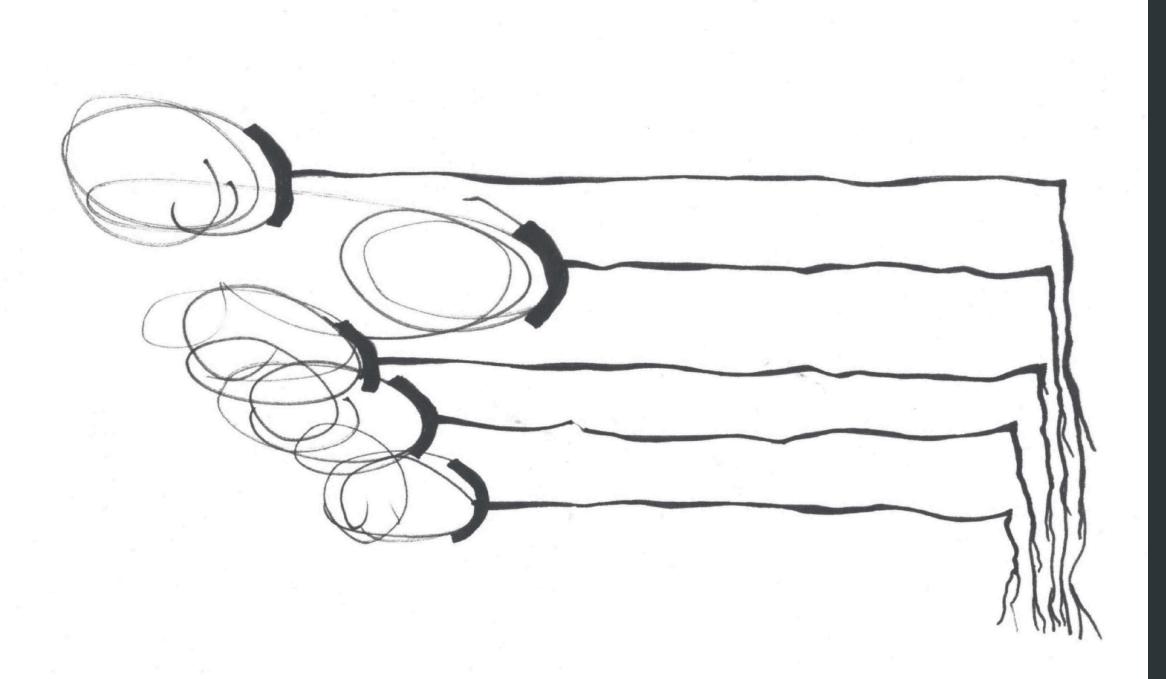
#### 2021

## 120" x 120" x 108" h

cedar, steel, cotton voile, stones, lighting photograph by Myles Pettengill







## coda

# ferried from forests

founded in the urgency...certainty of this maker
shards of dream and memory colliding
birthing, caressing, hearing us

observers, dreamers, memorists

he's cast an enchantment;

we drink from his cup

out of the moonlight...

into this sanctum.

–Karol Wasylyshyn





(above)

River Of love...Or Tears, 2003

44" x 20" x 48" h

ash, douglas fir, steel, bronze

Collection of Philadelphia Museum of Art
photograph by John Carlano

(left)
Endure The Dark, 2003
32" x 16" x 46" h
ash, white oak, cherry
Collection of Norman and Lita Weinstein
photograph by John Carlano



(above)

Balance Is A Verb, 2012

48" x 13" x 48" h

white oak, pine, douglas fir, plaster, steel

Collection of Philadelphia Museum of Art
photograph by John Carlano

(right)
Enrooted Loop, 2013
25" x 24" x 28" h
paulownia, bubinga, linden, steel
photography by John Carlano







(above)

Both And, 2012

15" x 16" x 73" h

douglas fir, bronze
photograph by John Carlano

(left)

Id Rides Out On The Ego, 2012

14" x 17" x 53" h

white Pine and glass
photograph by John Carlano



(above)
The Meaning Of Time Cannot Be Known, 2007
22" x 18" x 64" h
paulownia, cherry, bronze, steel
photograph by John Carlano

(right)
re-pair, 2016
58" x 28" x 48" h pr.
douglas fir and steel
photography by Michael Koehler



## THE TEAM OF PEOPLE THAT MADE THIS EXHIBITION & PUBLICATION POSSIBLE

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Keith Wasserman Karol Wasylyshyn Two F 160 To See To See

Accretion 1, 2021 drawing by Benn Colker



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