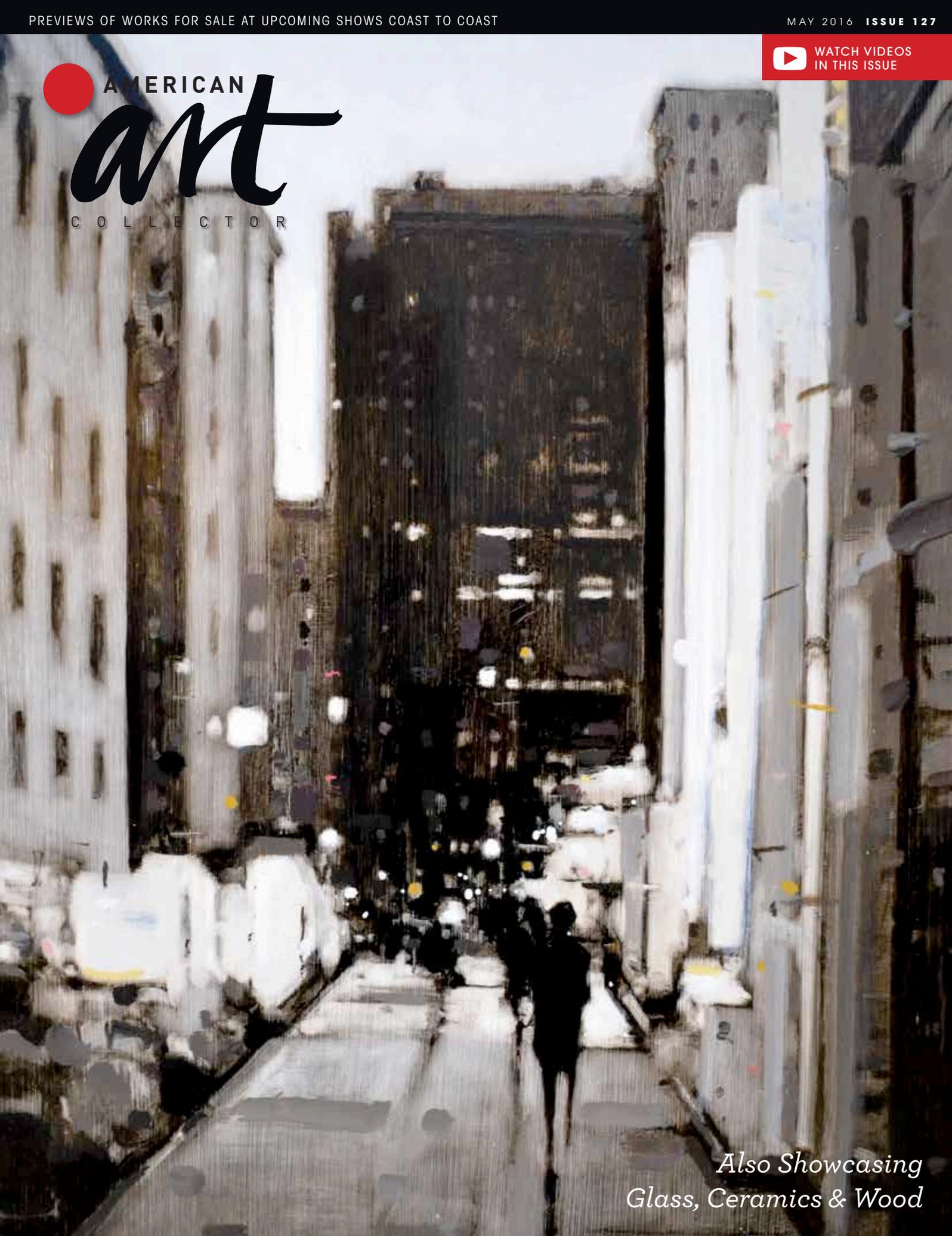


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Quickly Followed With Impeding Threat

An Interview with Scott Hove

By Sarah Elise Abramson and Brennan Lowe

Scott Hove is an amazingly kind, intriguing and passionate artist. With his big exhibit at Think Tank Gallery in Los Angeles just coming to an end, we are all left with a sweet yet bold aftertaste in our mouths. The show was all consuming; a full sensory artistic experience. He has shown at places such as La Luz De Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles, Hashimoto Contemporary in San Francisco, and has had commissioned work displayed in London and Beijing, to name a few. Hove's work explores the relationship between light and dark, divine and evil. Brennan Lowe wrote a few words about his thoughts on this very topic.

"Everything feels too much like sunshine and butterflies and in the end that easiness is boring. I want art to have some balls and really test the viewers' abilities to live inside themselves. Everything is too comfortable, utopian visions never brought about strength. But everyone is trying to be too nice. The institutions will only promote the equivalent of sunset landscapes, peaceful and reassuring. Is there not ugliness and

dirt, are we attempting to rewrite the Bible so Satan isn't in it?

"That someone would love enough to be willing to sacrifice being loved back in order to guide takes strength. What is our duty as artists? To only portray the beautiful? To only show bright colors and pretty flowers? Is that truth? Or what is light without darkness? Understanding one helps understand the other. They are bound by their relationship and it is the artist's duty to challenge and question the way things are.

I'm asleep, sleeping but not dreaming, resting without breathing. I need someone to yell, wake me up so I can see unconscious things. The paradox of awareness is that its journey takes belief and wonder. Activated imagination willing to take on any power structure, obliterate weaknesses of the soul so that every aspect of life thereafter can be inside of the purity of likeness, watching the body from a distance while still connected to the feelings. The thickest of all metaphor, giving light to all that

stand in its presence, but what would day be without night? One defines the other and no hierarchy should exist between its absence, its death, which continually defines its presence."

As we all know, there is a spectrum of good and bad, dark and light. Where do you feel your work sits on that spectrum and why?

I'd like to think that my work falls right in the middle of it all. The recurring theme since the beginning of my art practice has been the play between light and dark or masculine and feminine, with an eye on all of its extremes. Starting from that point is poignant for whatever story you're trying to tell, whether political or scientific, dramatic or mythological. In the context of my work, there is the need to tell this story and also a desire to create an intense experience for my viewer, because that is what we all seek in art...a memorable experience loaded with archetypes that we can really relate to, so we can in turn know ourselves better.

The obvious use of decadence combined with violence, grime and grit is a personal favorite of mine. Can you talk a little bit about this?

Part of the mission of *Cakeland* is to at least a small degree to capture some of the essence of past decadent periods, like high Roman, French Rococo, American neoclassical, or many others...while keeping in mind the reasons for their often spectacular decay

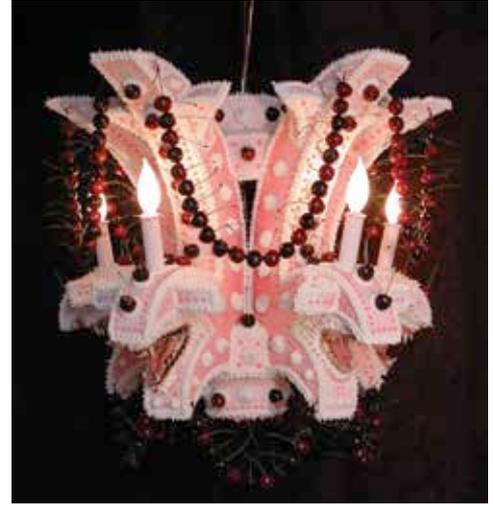




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and fall. I also love independent attempts at re-creating this type of aesthetic, whether or not it succeeds. I have also been obsessed with objects that are feared, desired or worshipped, like dragsters, switchblades and stripper heels. One of my favorite types of contemporary decorative art is the golden assault weapons crafted for some of the leaders of the Mexican drug cartels. Not many objects can provoke such a combined sense of admiration and dread. Many of my sculptures attempt to capture this brutal dualism.

How did your upbringing, as well as your surroundings throughout your life, influence your art?

I had a pretty gentle upbringing among the woods and beaches of Northern California. I could study nature at length, and neglected much of my traditional schooling, which seemed so incongruous when compared to how nature really operated. I could roam the cemetery behind my house and the miles of hills beyond, even at night, like a wild animal, in relative safety. This fostered my obsession with light and dark, but also helped make me pretty useless in the world of practical people with regular jobs.

When did *Cakeland* start?

I started doing *Cakeland* in about 2005, at a point during the 18 years that I had a studio in the wild and dangerous streets of West Oakland. I'd create installations using boxes and debris I found on the street, and that quickly evolved into gallery shows for sculpture and installations, as a result of the remarkable response people were having to the very sensual nature of the medium and style. There was such a willingness from my viewers and galleries to go for the fantasy I was trying to convey that there was no question that I needed to precede.

What keeps you driven? Who and what inspire you?

Right now, what keeps me driven is the constant hustle. I have no backup plan, so I have no choice but to stay as busy as I can. The advantage of not having a backup plan is the total concentration on the one mission. Only with that kind of focus may you have a chance to really get traction in the wide-open and competitive world of fine art. It's also very inspiring to be able to actually create anything that strangers can relate to these days. It makes me feel like I actually belong.

What is your life like outside of art, if that exists?

It is pretty quiet. I usually stay as close to nature as I can, even though I live in LA. I go deep into the desert whenever I have the opportunity. For the time being I am not dependent on anyone and no one is dependent on me. I have a rad dog and cat.

What are some of your favorite obsessions?

My favorite obsession is figuring out my place, and all of our places, in the universe, and to know why this is all happening. Half of the time I really understand it and am enraptured by this vast connectivity; the rest of the time I have forgotten and feel lost and isolated. Art brings me back to knowing again.

What can we expect to see from you in the future?

I will continue to refine *Cakeland* and make it as accessible as I can, in the most surprising and spectacular ways I can imagine. This is a mission to the death for me, and so far, I am really enjoying the life that comes with it.

Contact at

www.mshove.com

1
Wayne LaPierre Pacifier,
mixed acrylic media

2
Black Metal Emissary,
mixed acrylic media and
switchblade knives

3
*Pentagonal Infinity Disco
Chamber*, mixed media
installation

4
White Fang (detail),
silicone and mixed
media on stripper heels

5
Chandelier, mixed acrylic
media

Sarah Elise Abramson is a contemporary fine art photographer based in San Pedro, California—a mysterious postindustrial enclave whose offbeat countercultural history and proliferation of unusual sights, sounds and citizens is tailor-made for Abramson's obsession with everyday surrealism. In both her own photography and in her curatorial and editorial approach to exhibition projects and independent publications, her emphasis is on discovering the eccentric beauty in the things most people overlook. Found objects, hidden messages, secrets of the universe that hide in plain sight—throughout her studies at Parsons The New School for Design and Brooks Institute of Photography, and later at LaChapelle Studios, her work has evolved from finding to intuitively creating original daydreams and shared cosmologies.

