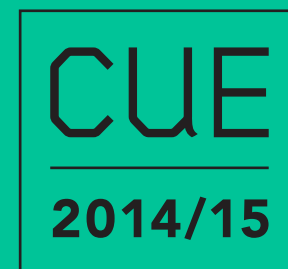


DINA
KELBERMAN



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WHAT IS IN IT

CUE ART FOUNDATION SEPTEMBER 6 - OCTOBER 10, 2014

Each year, CUE invites ten individuals from across the country to anonymously nominate up to three artists for the solo exhibition program. Artists are invited to apply, and the final selection is made by an independent jury each fall. Jurors for the 2014-15 season were Magdalena Sawon, owner/director of Postmasters Gallery; Papo Colo, artist and former founder/director of Exit Art; and Gregory Amenoff, artist and former Chair, Visual Arts, Columbia University School of the Arts.

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CUE ART FOUNDATION IS A DYNAMIC VISUAL ARTS CENTER DEDICATED TO CREATING ESSENTIAL CAREER AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGING ARTISTS OF ALL AGES. THROUGH EXHIBITIONS, ARTS EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS, CUE PROVIDES ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES WITH SUSTAINING AND MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCES.

DINA KELBERMAN

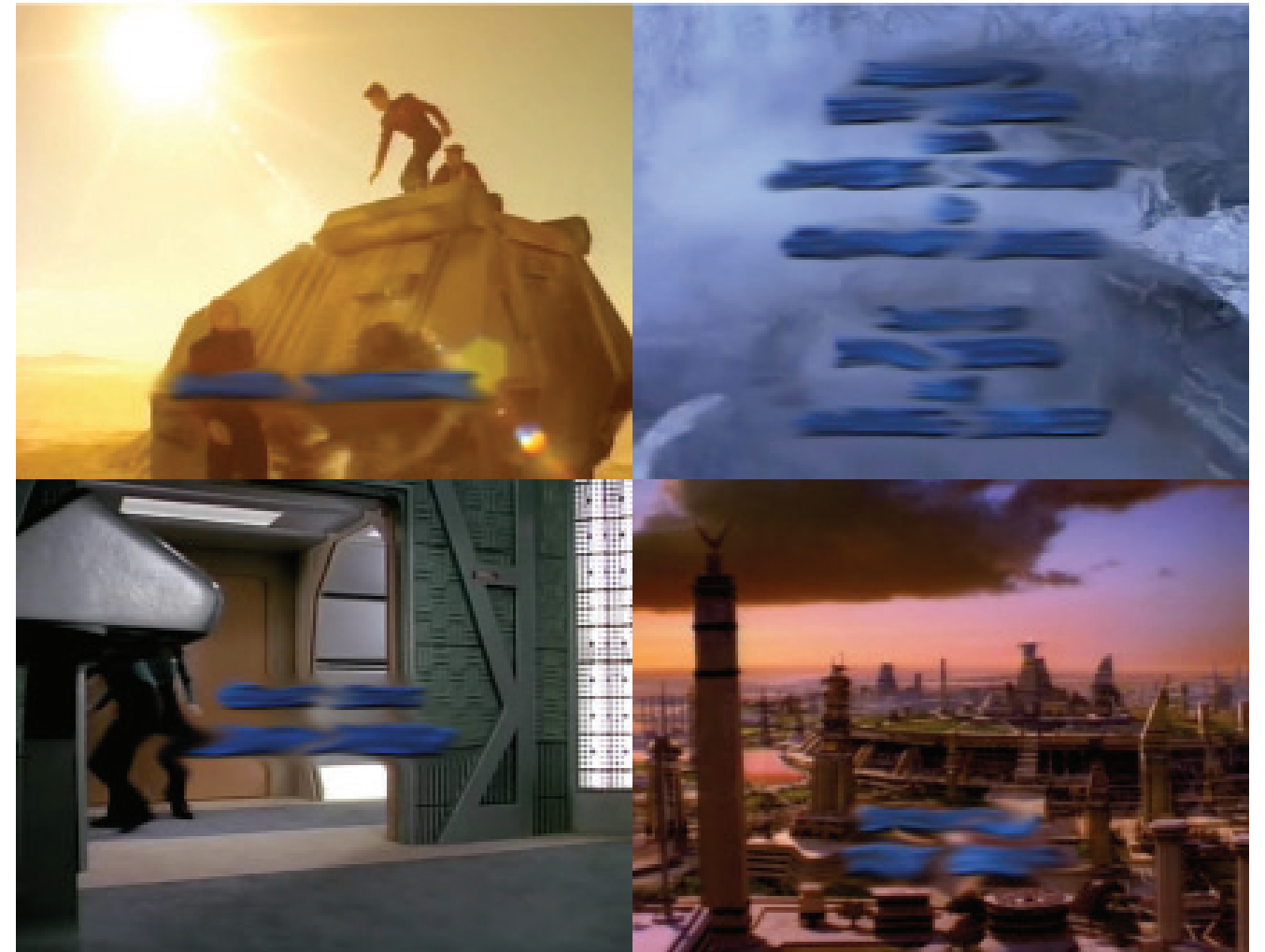
Dina Kelberman is an artist living and working in Baltimore, MD. She works in a wide variety of media including screencaps, animated gifs, comics, painting, writing, photography, and sculpture. She has shown and spoken about her work internationally, is a founding member of the Wham City artist collective and a weekly comics contributor to the Baltimore *City Paper*. Kelberman was recently invited to create an original web-based piece, *Smoke and Fire*, for the New Museum.

STATEMENT

I am very interested in resourcefulness and enjoy setting up limitations and then seeing what is possible within them. In this way my work is very much a game. I make things as I am compelled to make them and consider why later, often making connections I didn't consciously set out to realize. Much of my work comes out of my natural tendency to spend long hours collecting and organizing imagery from the internet, television, and other commonplace surroundings of my everyday life.

I gravitate towards things that are simple, colorful, industrial, and mundane. I am also interested in using materials that are easily accessible and familiar to the everyday person. My work seeks to elevate the familiar and transform brief moments into infinite stretches of time. In close examination of the simple or the seemingly insignificant the viewer may bring their own limitless associations.

IMAGES



Blue Clouds (selections from series), 2012
*Final Mission, Power Play, The Enemy,
Unification Part II 2*
Screencaps with blurred credits



Cloud Formations

(selections from series), 2013

Marjorie Morningstar, They Came to Cordura, Dirt, Seminole

Stills from Animated GIFs made from
screencaps with blurred credits



Halloween Movie, 2013
Arranged & looped found videos

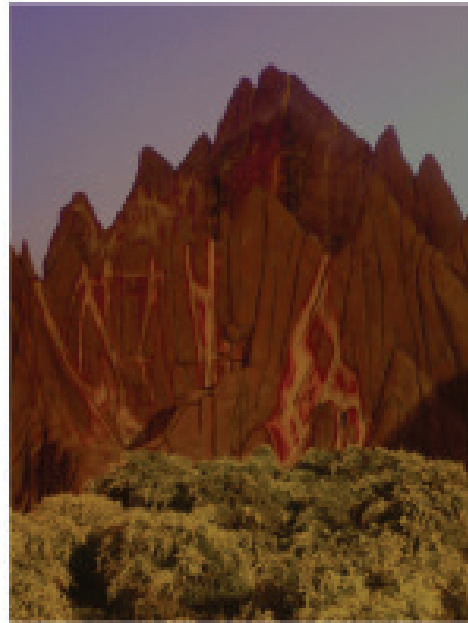
PAGES 11-15
I'm Google, 2011 - ongoing
 Tumblr blog of found
 images and videos.
<http://dinakelberman.tumblr.com>







"It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly, a shot rang out! A door slammed. The maid screamed. Suddenly, a pirate ship appeared on the horizon! While millions of people were starving, the king lived in luxury. Meanwhile, on a small farm in Kansas, a boy was growing up."



Lost Galaxy at Planet Maze
(selections from series), 2013
Cell phone photos and Snoopy text



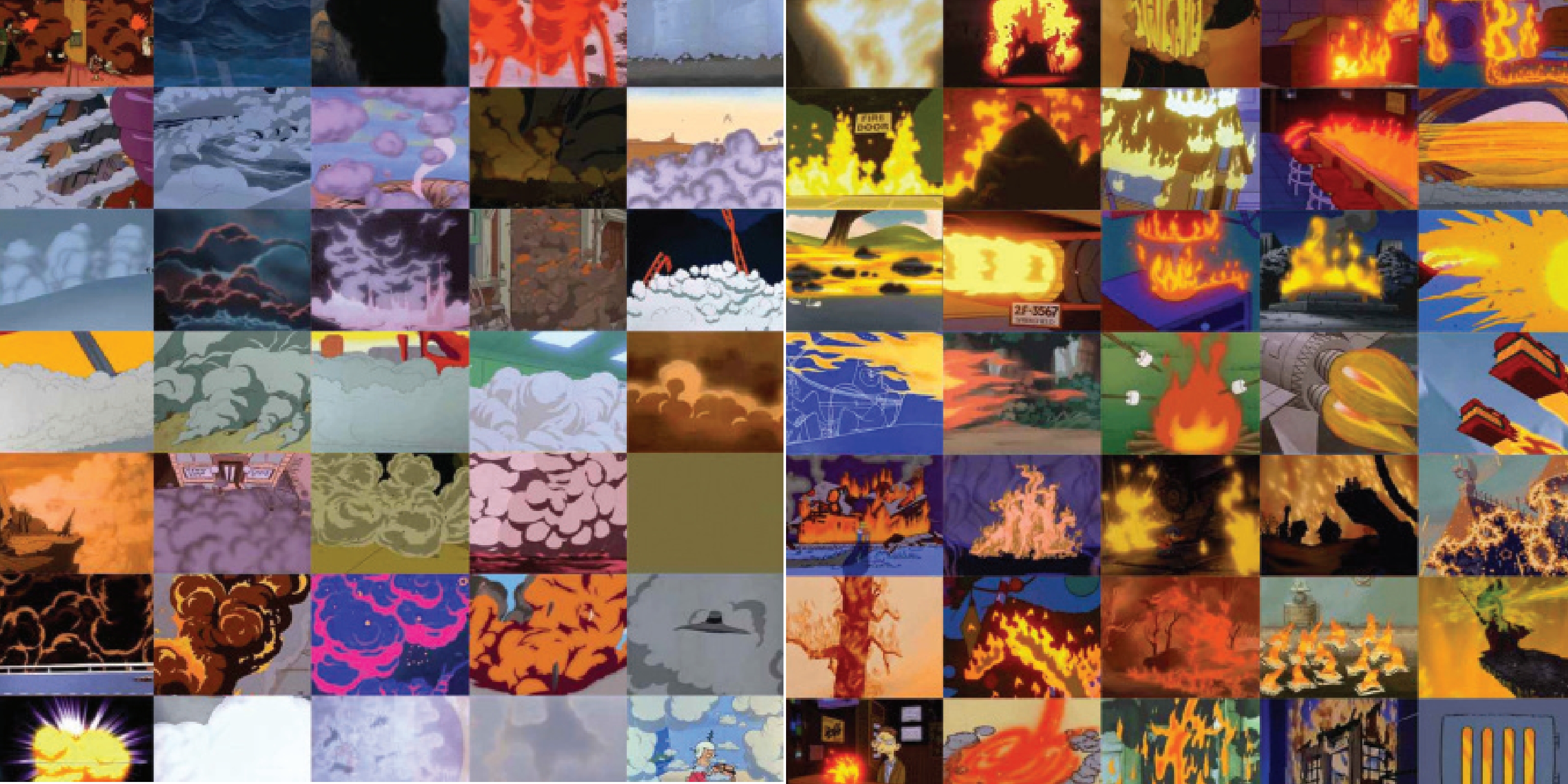
Untitled Phone Photos, 2011
Cell phone photos



ABOVE
Sleep Video (still), 2013
 Overlaid YouTube playlists of found videos
 continuously edited & reconfigured.
 Commission from *West Space Journal*.

OPPOSITE & FOLLOWING SPREAD
Smoke & Fire (stills), 2013 - ongoing
 Website arrangement of animated GIFs made from
 cartoons. Commission from the New Museum.
<http://dinakelberman.com/smokeandfire>







The Thing Itself #21 (from series), 2008
Gouache, pen, white-out on inkjet print
8.5" x 11"



The Thing Itself #18 (from series), 2008.
Gouache, pen, white-out on inkjet print.
8.5" x 11"

WRITING /

DINA KELBERMAN'S *I'M GOOGLE*

Stephanie Barber

Smoke becomes fibers and fibers become wood and wood wood packaged and packages packed packages which become buckets which sit on bleachers which surround stadiums which call to grass which calls to painted lawns of chemical colors and turn romantic in the night.

Things become other things and for a short while echo themselves as if trying to 'get it right'.

What a thing really is is both what it had been (the tree before the wood slats which made the wooden bench) what it could be (the fire caused by the bench's sad encounter with a cigarette) and what it is not (a roll of pink plastic sheeting). And what a thing is may also be, in Kelberman's hands, what it might be resonant with (through hue or form or proximity allusive).

Through these varied resonances she is putting the Internet in order.

You can almost hear her frustrated sigh as she, with an obsessive's swift mouse move, puts the images in the right place. Heretofore untethered, without kin, in the terrifying ether of collective experience, the images breathe a different sigh.

This organizing of the Internet brings to mind Rob Fitterman's recent organization of some of the internet's sentences which construct his book *No, Wait, Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself*.

The question of sentences organized and reorganized brings to mind Lola Pierson's recent adaptation of the Peter Handke play *Kaspar*.

Kelberman's adaptation is simply placement. Perusal and placement.

Kelberman's humor is simply placement. Perusal and placement.

Humor is simply reference. Digital hoarder humor.

Kelberman’s piece *I’m Google* (2011-ongoing) suggests that everything is a reference to everything else and the reference and reverence of such obsession is our modern appetite for both documentation and endless checking in on others’ documentation.

Reference too, is being referenced.

So much of *I’m Google* points not only to the objects and actions featured in Kelberman’s image choices but the act of referencing, the act of rhyming, that the Internet engages in, the algorithms of consumer culture. The cloying phrase “you might also enjoy” is here mocked through sheer implicatory endlessness.

What might we enjoy?

We might enjoy the “ah-ha” moments we imagine Kelberman to have experienced when coming upon just the right image to move from one pictorial thought-run to the next. A chess-like mastery as she places the offering that will change the direction of the game.

We might enjoy some simple wonders such as learning that sometimes people wrap their homes in brightly colored plastic.

We might enjoy contemplating the concept of learning through images alone. A learning and understanding that sidesteps language and by appealing to our senses feels more immediate and actual. Incomplete and suppositional.

Søren Kierkegaard’s suggestion that to understand the concrete one must abandon abstraction (let’s say

image and language respectively). Though, one of the things Kelberman has done is change the meaning of these images.

And, like Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept of “language games[,]” this linguistic (imagistic) lability lays bare the structure of the device. The structure of Google and the structure of Kelberman’s game.

Context is concept. And vice versa. And versa and versa ad infinitum like the Music of the Spheres. Musica Universalis. The music of proportional balance and order which serenades our cosmos.

Scrolling through *I’m Google* feels very much like the experience of listening to a piece of music. Falling deeply into a phrase or movement and then, for a moment, losing your focus to come back and wonder “how did I get here?” as your toes dig deeply into plush carpet.

I am thinking right now about Harry Partch’s composition *Barstow*. For the “libretto” Partch collected hitchhiker inscriptions. The “how did I get here” becoming spatialized through the snippets of narrative and set against the abstract, conceptual music.

Kelberman plays with concepts (potholders, say) for a short or longer while, a staccato or legato pacing. Sometimes a coda brings a run back around. Like music or poetry *I’m Google* unfurls itself through time. Ideas are played with for a while and subtly or jarringly transition to other ideas.

These transitions are where the real magic of the piece is. The leaps are delicate and expected (like a hand painted orange to an orange glove) and

unexpected (like doll shoes to hearing aids). Perfect and allegorical.

The real magic is not contained in any one element of the piece. That’s why it is real magic.

Kelberman has simultaneously compressed and expanded these images’ potential. An impressive sleight of hand.

The plastic bag filled with orange gel moves from the narrative of its origin to the narrative of Kelberman’s poem. The potential for transcendence in the life of any object is almost painful. The way it pokes at our own objecthood. Our own oppressive potential. The daunting bounty of existences which the Internet suggests possible and the oppressive realization that our personal narratives are limited.

The daunting recognition that this fractalized Internet is our collective human narrative.

The gentle curve and comfort of the word “narrative,” so like the crook of an arm.

The use of the word “I’m” in Kelberman’s title simultaneously biographical and autobiographical.

Or, much like *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, through which we come to know Gertrude Stein, Kelberman, while writing the ostensible story of the Internet, has told her own story.

I would like to skip any reference to the spectacle’s hand in autobiography.

Imagine Guy Debord’s hands resting patiently upon a table.

There are so many people’s hands in these images.

Whole people, though, are used carefully. Sparsely.

People are used either as objects (crowds of people with the same color clothes) or accoutrements to an action (welders are present but the welding spark is the activator of the image and the change it will precipitate) (ditto the sand hole dwellers, the balloon blowers, the fire starters, cart wheelers and rope dangles).

But people are so present as they must always be.

Why must the people always be so present?

Leon Battista Alberti is so present (as he must always be). His reference, in *On Painting*, to Narcissus as regards the human desire to create art, stares grimly in our direction.

Also the fenestrae caeli.

The heavens being our human impulse to document, save, share and the window Kelberman’s formatting.

Kelberman’s formatting and the Internet itself. So many windows.

And though so much can be thought here about appropriation and the frenzy of ownership (concrete and abstract ownership) there is, in *I’m Google*, very little real appropriating going on. Kelberman allows for each image to be traceable to its original “place” in the Internet. An expansive and inclusive gesture.

We float along the linearity and stream of consciousness with our eyes listening hard for the

stasis and changes; codas and revelations; patterns and disruptions.

We believe each pattern or disruption to be a clue to be employed in the deciphering of actuality.

Manuel De Landa, in thinking about Gilles Deleuze and the notion of essences wrote: “actualization or differentiation is always a genuine creation.”

Essences are so apt here. Deleuze’s essences, Plato’s essences. The *essence* of Kelberman’s piece is the essence of the image. Merely that what a thing *is* is this desire to represent what a thing is.

Is the *is* desire?

The poetics of desire are reified by repetition.

The repetition itself a statement about history. History and desire pointing easily to Susan Sontag and just what she has to say about photographs.

The way that photographs develop our sense of history, our character, our *national* character.

Character development here is crafted by, not looking *in* or *at* the character, but rather *from* the character. We come to know Kelberman through her choices, her attractions, her humor. Her compositional and chromatic leanings which are as clear and direct as the aesthetics upon which they are built.

Bowerbirds building bowers.

This building and cataloging of our personal and collective narratives through rhyming visuals, like the songlines created through the dreaming, will help us find our way. Back.

Oh, there is only so much light that can be brought to bear witness to our desire to see our lives and environs reflected back to us. Our frenzy for simultaneously realistic and transcendent mimesis is anthemic.

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This essay was written as part of the **Young Art Critics Mentoring Program**, a partnership between AICA-USA (US section of International Association of Art Critics) and CUE, which pairs emerging writers with AICA mentors to produce original essays on a specific exhibiting artist. Please visit aicausa.org for more information on AICA USA, or cueartfoundation.org to learn how to participate in this program. Any quotes are from interviews with the author unless otherwise specified. No part of this essay may be reproduced without prior consent from the author. Lilly Wei is AICA's Coordinator for the program this season. For additional arts-related writing, please visit on-verge.org.

Stephanie Barber is an American writer and artist. Barber’s films and videos have been exhibited at MoMA, NY; The Tate Modern, London; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Paris Cinematheque; The Walker Art Center, MN; MOCA Los Angeles; The Wexner Center for Art, OH, among other galleries, museums and festivals. Her films and videos are distributed by Video Data Bank, Canyon Cinema, and Fandor.com. Her recent book, *Night Moves*, was published by Publishing Genius Press in 2013. Other essays, stories and poems have been published in books, magazines and online journals. Her first feature, *DAREDEVILS* premiered at the New York Film Festival’s “Views from the Avant-Garde” and will screen at The National Gallery in Washington DC in September 2014. Barber is currently a resident artist at The Mt. Royal MFA for Interdisciplinary Art at MICA in Baltimore, MD.

Mentor **Barbara A. MacAdam** is deputy editor of *ARTnews*. She has also worked as executive editor of *Art + Auction*, and was an editor of *Review: Latin American Literature and Arts* and of *New York Magazine*. She has written on design for *ID* magazine, reviewed books on art and literature for the *LA Times Book Review*, *Newsday*, and *The New York Times Book Review*, among others, and has written for a number of other magazines and newspapers on art, design, and literature. She has also curated art exhibitions at nonprofit spaces and is president of AICA/USA (the International Art Critics Association) and of the Paris-based Arts Arena.

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