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(e)merge Preview: Andrew Wodzianski

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At last year's (e)merge art fair, Andrew Wodzianski floated in the Capitol Skyline Hotel rooftop pool, resting inside a coffin for 36 hours.

A most memorable endurance performance, *Self Portrait as Ishmael* was the vehicle by which Andrew embodied Ishmael, the protagonist in Herman Melville's great American novel, *Moby Dick*.

"I feel like when I'm reading fiction, I always try to find connections between the characters and myself and that helps me escape into the author's context," Andrew explained, "I find so much connectivity with these characters and it seems like I can camouflage or meld myself into that character description. The transition doesn't seem so alien."

For the third annual (e)merge art fair, October 3- 6, Andrew is challenging himself to embody a character haunting him since childhood. Jack Torrence, the protagonist in Stephen King's 1977 novel *The Shining* (and portrayed by Jack Nicholson in Stanley Kubrick's 1980 film), is the character that frightened young Andrew and inspired him to explore horror as a film student.

A trained oil painter with a traditional studio practice, Andrew's interest in self-portraiture harkens to his college dreams of working with special effects in Hollywood.

"I was fascinated with disguise and transformation, and when I got older it evolved more into an academic level," Andrew said. He combined talents in the fine arts and interests in controlled metamorphosis with the most readily available model, himself, to create the series of self portraits his audiences know from (e)merge.

"There's this really rich depository for me to explore and I feel closer to this than a lot of the work I have done in the past," said Andrew, "It really just does seem to be this beautiful convergence of all these long standing interests of mine, be it the skies or cinema or literature, it all seems to be rolling itself up wonderfully."

As part of his preparations for *Self Portrait as Jack Torrence*, in which for the duration of the art fair Andrew will be occupying the Capitol Skyline hotel lobby and typing James Howell's proverb, "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy," the artist created a Venn diagram listing the traits he shares with Jack Torrence. Intimate insights such as recluse, self-loathing, witness to spousal abuse, and vulgar, are included among milestones like graduate education, early success, stagnant mid-career, husband, younger brother, and educator.

"It's incredibly personal and it's a little bit uncomfortable," Andrew said of the Venn diagram he recently shared with his Kickstarter backers.

To help raise funds for his performance, including insurance, furniture, wardrobe, and the purchase and repair of an Adler Universal typewriter of the same model used in the Kubrick film, Andrew launched a Kickstarter campaign. Originally hoping to raise \$375 in total, Andrew is pleasantly surprised to have 58 backers, whose donations have totaled \$1,145 to date. The repairs and cleaning of the typewriter alone cost more than \$430.

"The machine also has connectivity with my family history. My father fled from Poland in World War II," explained Andrew, "It also goes back to my theater days as a prop master. I wanted to have some sort of fidelity with the Kubrick film."

Andrew's passion and sincerity for his artistic practice is extraordinary. Adopting the same fervor for Ishmael and Jack Torrence as do method actors when preparing for a feature film role, Andrew's performances are astonishing for they succeed at convincing the viewer he is not only witnessing, but also playing a part in the familiar scene. It is as if Andrew creates moments of nostalgia for memories that never existed.

"You see the madness of descent into insanity through cinematic trickery," Andrew said of Jack Torrence's obsessive typing in the film version. He explained, "The performance that I'm doing is actually manifesting that descent. Because I'm there for such a long time [...] I'm trying to recreate the moment of the character's actions, which are never seen in real time."

Self Portrait as Jack Torrence will be performed by Andrew Wodzianski in the Capitol Skyline Hotel lobby for 23 hours during the (e)merge art fair, October 3- 6, 2013.

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Roxanne Goldberg