

Transcription for Artist Talk with Danny Jauregui

Okay, hi and welcome everyone, my name is Jamie my pronouns are she her hers and on behalf of the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs we are thrilled to present today's program as part of *COLA 2022*.

As a public and civic institution, we acknowledge that our gallery resides on what was historically the homeland of Kizh, Tongva and Chumash peoples who were dispossessed of their land. We encourage you to share what land you are on today in the chat if you feel comfortable doing that.

And, before I introduce and hand it off to Danny, I have a few housekeeping notes to go over. The first is just we ask that you please make sure your microphone is muted during the artist talk portion of the program, that way we prevent any feedback or any other inadvertent disruption. And as the Zoom mentioned at the start, we are recording today's program just for archival purposes and that way, we make it available for folks who may not, may not otherwise have had the chance to join us today. And we will have time, towards the end of the program for a Q and A with Danny, so if you have any questions or comments or whatnot feel free to enter them in the chat or when we get to the Q and A portion, you're more than welcome to take yourself off mute and ask Danny directly. Just use the use the chat and we'll keep an eye on it.

And well we're also really grateful to have the support of the Department on Disability for this program. So, we have sign language interpreters available Nicole and Hillary and we also have captioning being provided by Cindy here so, there's also my colleague Stephanie just entered the live stream text in the chat if you'd like to access the live captioning that way, or you can enable that through Zoom right now.

And with that just it's just on behalf of the gallery again it's been a true honor and pleasure to work with Danny and all of this year's *COLA 2022* Design and Visual artists. Danny has actually been featured in an exhibition at the gallery before in the 2020 show *ARCHIVE MACHINES* so it's an incredible pleasure to work with Danny and with the new work that he'll be talking about today. It's just it's truly just inspirational so we're super excited and thrilled to have Danny here to talk us through and share a little bit more about his work and, with that I'm going to hand it off to Danny.

Thanks, Jamie. Yeah so, I just wanted to start off by saying thank you to, to Jamie and Stephanie and to Department of Cultural Affairs and the LA Barnsdall Municipal Gallery for this this incredible opportunity it's really amazing to to be able to get this fellowship I mean it's so rare for for city kind of to be supporting artists directly in the way that *COLA* does so I really kind of appreciate it. What I, what I what I thought I'd do with with the talk today I think in talking with Jamie we thought what, how can we do this a little bit differently, and so what we what we came to was that I would show you the work that I created for *COLA* but also talk to you a little bit about the research that goes on with the work, and then a little bit of the process, given that that there's some technology involved.

So, it'll be it'll be that kind of talk. So, if you give me a one second, I will share my screen and then we can get started. Okay, can everybody see that? We good? All right, so the series of work that that I'm going to show you today is called *Nunca Cerramos*. So, that's the title of the of the the images. So, these are images that I created specifically for the COLA fellowship. And the main idea here the kind of thread throughout all of the images, is that they are images of what I call an imaginary artifacts. So, these are our artifacts. Objects, relics, talismans that I invented and then using 3D modeling software so CGI software that is used for video games and for special effects and movies. I digitally sculpted, textured and then I brought them into a different program and lit them like they were still life objects and then photographed them. All using virtual cameras and lights and textures. So, what I'll go through is I'll go through a few of the images and then I'll kind of dive into a little bit of the research.

All of the images and objects that I created have some either loose or direct connection to queer spaces predominantly in Los Angeles. So this one, *Tearoom Talisman*, it's a bronze kind of talisman that is made out in the layout of a map of a tea room, which is a public bathroom that is utilized by men for anonymous sex. So, I decided to kind of light them and place them in in these different locales that kind of, either feel like they're in a museum, or they could also feel like they're in a domestic space. So, it goes in and out of these public and private spaces. And here I was thinking a lot about the idea of archives and thinking about traditional archives are kind of centralized right so there's one location and, and it's that you go to the collection and you know, thinking that way. But I was thinking well what would a queer archive be, and so I thought that a queer archive would be decentralized right, so it wouldn't be in one location, it would be, it would be decentralized and spread out and amorphous and unofficial in a lot of ways. So, I think the collection of images and and locations, that the objects are in is this sort of decentralized queer archive.

Some of the images that I created have what I referred to as ritual objects, objects of ritual. So, these are imaginary objects that I would that I kind of imagine would be used in this sort of ritual. But again, they're all connected to different queer spaces in Los Angeles, so this one, and I will show you some of the references in a second, but this one is in a bronze offering cup that is connected to a bathhouse in Hollywood called the Hollywood Y Baths. This one is. I kind of modeled this one so that it would look like a miniature jade sculpture, of the gay club Arena, so this is a club that was predominantly a Latinx queer club. Especially in the 90s, I remember going to Arena, and when I was in high school it's no longer there. So, I wanted to somehow pay tribute to to this club, and I created this this jade artifact. But one of the things that I was really interested in in the work is that I think of what I'm doing as a as a form of brujería, so this this type of like witchcraft I and that I'm bringing these objects from from archives to life so I'm kind of conjuring them. So I wanted to imbue an object with that kind of power, so in this case I made, I made the object levitate so that it would suggest that that that the object itself has this this inner power and that we're you know it's photographed in this moment. And here I'm really kind of playing with with the possibility of the software, I mean it's it's 3D modeling software so literally, anything is possible. So, I the most obvious thing for me

was like well, it could defy gravity, because I can make anything in this in this three-dimensional world and part of the reason why I was attracted to the modeling software is is that very thing strikes me as as incredibly queer, the idea that there's possibility it's and it's an endless possibility. That's that's something that I associate with queerness and that it, there's so much potential, in an alternative world and this software is literally made to build worlds, so I thought it was kind of a really beautiful marriage of the of the subject with the technology.

So, this one kind of gives you a little bit more sense of a museological or an archive a traditional kind of setting where we have the marble tablet and this one is related to Hyperion Baths, a bathhouse in Silverlake that's no longer there. Another image that is within that kind of museum space, Copper Lantern, 1532 Sunset Boulevard. So, one of the things that that runs through all of the work is that almost all of them are connected to actual archival documents that I find either in public archives, or that I have in my own personal collection. A majority of these are are coming from ONE Archives. So ONE Archives is the archives at USC it's the the largest gay and lesbian archive in the world and that's where I discovered Bob Damron's *The Address Book*. So, I've done work on this before and I'll kind of show you a little bit of that but Bob Damron's address book was a secret gay guide guide book that was developed by Bob Damron. Damron in 1965 so it's a little book that listed gay bars and restaurants safe spaces for men to meet and he published one every single year and it included spaces in every city. ONE Archives has an entire collection one booklet from every year, and in this particular one I forgot what year, this one is I think it's in the this is like a 70s one but whoever owns this book crossed out the addresses of the spaces that were no longer there. And most of my work has always been about erasure, about gentrification, and and the loss of gay spaces in Los Angeles in particular. So, that line, that crossing out line, was was such a beautiful and poignant metaphor for for all of the work that that I had been doing and I decided to just make it into a tablet here.

So, on the left, you can see the image that I shot at ONE Archives of the book, and then on the right, you can see how I'm connecting it directly to the tablet so I'm literally imposing it onto this tablet and then making the lines red, just so that it highlights them. So, this is an image of of the address book, the very first one, and it looks really big here but it's really tiny. And the idea of *The Address Book* was that in there in the first ones pre-Stonewall the address book did not have any mention of gay or queer like there was nothing, none of that it was all done in secret code and lingo because if you were caught with one of these you if you recall, with any kind of gay paraphernalia, then you would be arrested, so this was was done as a covert way that he would sort of sell individually. And again, he published it every year in the 70s post-Stonewall you start to see them using more overtly, it becomes more overt so it's you know images of men and gay this and gay that because it became safer to do so. I've utilized archives before, and specifically the Damron guides in previous work, so this is an animation from 2016 that uses some of the advertisements. And in this in this animation a line of erasure sort of erases the advertisement but I've stacked them digitally so when you erase one and reveals another, and this is sort of, I was thinking metaphorically as an attempt to counter the erasure by insisting that one be there. But, ultimately that it ends up becoming this

web of images that that, then you can't really decipher anything so it's it's about a futility to to kind of counter that erasure.

In 2018 I did another another animation, I think this was the one that was in the *ARCHIVE MACHINES* of the actual Damron guides and then. The biggest project that I did with the Damron guides was this website *Disguised Ruins* where I digitally input every single address in the Los Angeles section of the Damron guides and then mapped the opening and closing of the spaces. So, this is a an animated map that that every for however long the the address shows up in the in the guidebook a kind of white dot appears glowing and then, when it when it doesn't show up in the guidebooks anymore reveals, so you really you kind of see the rise and the fall of these gay spaces and it kind of directly correlates with the rise of the gay rights movement and then the AIDS crisis. Because, as soon as the AIDS crisis hits in the 80s mid 80s you start to see the decline of the spaces on the map, so it goes from really, really bright and effervescent to kind of dark.

So I've been doing this, this work with these archives in the past that I wasn't really satisfied with. I knew that there was more that I could use that more that I could do specifically with the advertisements and with all these documents that I had been collecting, but I, I was struggling to find ways that that that felt fulfilling and how to put them together. I was simultaneously obsessively reading *Archaeology Magazine*, just like randomly and I just love that magazine and it just, one of those days it's one of those things that was just in the studio where I just thought oh, I can just put these two things together. And and combine the advertisements with the kind of artifacts that I've been seeing in *Archaeology Magazine* together, and then it just everything kind of just made sense. So it opened up a whole new kind of way of working, for me. My training is in photography but for the last couple of years I've been doing mostly drawing and painting and it's only been in the last five years that have been really exploring digital media, but I did not know the software. I was actually learning the software, primarily, so that I could teach it. Not really intending to use it in my own artwork, but I think my mind was just within that sphere, and then it just a lot of things clicked together. So here on the left, you can see the Hyperion Baths and you can see, on the right, the, an image from the advertisement that you can see the the correlation there between the images.

This is the *Hollywood Y Baños*. This is the offering cup that I used and created this this ritual object and made it look like bronze but obviously copying the figure in in the advertisement. In addition to, to the Damron guides there's other documents that I found at One this, these in particular really interested me because I'm really interested in mapping, especially the idea of the concept of counter mapping, so this notion of mapping unofficial data onto onto maps or using maps as a, as a as an object of protest. So these are, I found out when archives and just sort of became obsessed with. These are observation sheets that a sociologist named Laud Humphreys created in 1965. These were what he used to eventually publish his book *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. And what it is, is that he would go into these tea rooms, which again are public restrooms that men use for anonymous sex and he kind of infiltrated the spaces and started observing the the movements and rituals really of how men would

engage in anonymous sex. And he would create these maps that mapped out the kind of you know, the movement. The way he was able to get away with it, is that he quickly realized that, that different men play different roles within that sphere, and one of the roles is that of what was known at the time as the watch queen. And the watch queen is someone who is a voyeur so it's a passive participant who just watches. Not only watches the kind of action that's happening in the tea room but also then watches out to make sure that, that other people don't come in, or that the cops don't come in. So, he played the role of the watch queen and that was the way he was able to sort of get away with doing this. I'm working on a whole other project that's related to this, but just so that you can see that I'm not just relying on the Damron guides, I'm also using other documents that I find in the archives and that's what *Tearoom Talisman* is based off of, it's based off of the map of the public tea rooms that Laud Humphreys created.

This is another advertisement and in this one I'm also starting to do something that I'm really excited about where I am taking the advertisements that I find or even just regular documents that I find in in at ONE and then what I'm doing is I'm translating them into Spanish. And this is one way of, I think of this as sort of addressing the missing subject in in in archives and thinking about address addressing a Latinx subject that I think is, not missing at ONE archives, because they definitely do have you know, Latinx objects, but it's definitely a predominantly white. And and thinking about how we tell a history where we're in Los Angeles, how do we center then Latinx queers. And because I was inventing objects, that was exciting, because then I thought well, that gives me liberty to do anything really I don't there's no fidelity that I have to stick to right. So, I started translating some of the the advertisements and then, in some cases, just completely creating copy altogether on my own. So, this one is on you know, on the left that's fun for all, and this one it's kind of hard to read, but it's translated to *aquí divertimos todos*. And, which is so you know saying like we all, we all have fun here, and then the copy that I added here is, it says come for the heated pool stay for the *putería*. So, it's using Spanglish which is usually the way that I use Spanish, unless I'm speaking to my parents and then I use my very bad broken Spanish. But, if I'm using Spanish in my day to day it's in Spanglish. So this was just kind of my attempt to to, to, address Latinx queers and and kind of our history within within the city. And so, the title of the of the body of work is called *Nunca Cerramos* which is taken from an advertisement for a bathhouse and literally their tagline is we never close. So, *Nunca Cerramos* translates to we never close which, again I just thought was such a perfect phrase for for this entire body of work, given that that they all are closed right so it's it's that was part of part of that idea here.

And then, something else that I'm doing in some of the images like I mentioned before, is some I'm placing in kind of museum spaces, but then others and I'm I'm doing what I think of as sort of like a type of repatriation, so thinking about placing these objects back into the queer spaces and gay spaces. So in this particular case using the dance floor of a club as a stage and thinking about the the display aesthetics of clubs and bars and kind of scrambling that with a kind of museological archive. So, I kind of think of this, as you know, leaned up against against the wall of the dance floor so that the lights of the club can can sporadically hit it and thinking here about like makeshift memorials thinking

about the way that that makeshift memorials happen kind of spontaneously and in, in unofficial spaces right. So here I'm playing with with that with that last tablet that you just saw and the other element of the work that that I was also really drawn to is is trying to make these look almost like, ancient in some cases, tablets or bronze objects, I was doing a lot of research on like Mayan jade objects. And that's the kind of the aesthetic that I'm trying to mimic here with with the, with the, with some of the tablets, and this really all started when I again in *Archaeology Magazine*, started discovering these images that I'm just completely obsessed with and still completely obsessed with I just think they're so beautiful, and these are lidar scans. So this is a type of scan scanning that sends out some sort of, I don't really understand how it works, but it sends out some sort of signal and then that signal bounces back, and it can measure the distance between how long it took for it to bounce back. I think most of our iPhones and your iPhones now have this technology, actually, so you can do 3D scanning with them with that same technology, but these are these are satellite images that were taken over Mayan ruins, and I just thought that they were just the most beautiful things. And I love the idea that the technology is is useful in this case, because it can see through the jungle so it's literally all of these things are buried underneath the jungle and the technology is allowing them to see the kind of invisible. And, as a metaphor analogy, I thought that was so kind of right up my alley and again for the longest time I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do something with this, but I could never really quite figure out what to do.

But this is where this all started so that just kind of going, not in chronological order, but this is where kind of this exploration, really, really started is in thinking about these satellite images. And how I can bring some of these kind of poetic metaphors to the work, one of the works that I created for *ARCHIVE MACHINES* was actually the very, very first early attempt at doing that. So, this is the very first digital attempt that I did when I'm using the digital software to sculpt and tried to create a map that looked very similar to these I mean this is sort of what I was trying to do in this *Watchqueen* (map). This is when I was very, very, very, first learning the software. I think my skills have improved a lot since then, but still, you can see, I think the connection between the source images and then how I'm combining them with archival documents and that's kind of what really led to to the *Nunca Cerramos* work. And tablets are another were another kind of source of inspiration for me different types of ancient tablets, and in particular I like the way that that tablets had missing parts and that seemed really important to me that it wasn't that the totality of the tablet that are these missing parts. And in some museums, they they repair the tablet and put a blank kind of piece in the corner, so you can see the whole shape and I always thought that was really beautiful as well, in terms of an analogy these images are has has the tablets incomplete. But, you can see here the way that I'm on, this is an early an early tablet that I that I worked on that I didn't end up using, but you can see that I'm taking the tablet and literally recreating it using digital software so here I'm using Cinema 4D is the digital software that I'm using to to sculpt these objects and then that's what allows me then to superimpose so this one, the tablet that you're seeing on the right has the the watch queen markings from the map kind of engraved into the tablet and it's that's what allows me to do some of the digital sculpting.

And the combination of the two but yeah the the software is is really interesting, this is an image of the of the actual tablet and it's it's a mesh it's all it's just geometry that then gets manipulated through using brushes and different tools, but it's it's quite literally a grid that then gets manipulated, you know and all kinds of different ways to create it. I wanted to kind of show you the the process that I go through, obviously I kind of, learned a lot of different software and then made some major leaps. This what I'm showing you right now is basically like a progression of over like three or four years um it's some of the software is extremely difficult to learn and it's taken I, and I still, by the way, only know, like the very, very surface like I just scratched the surface, on the software, but on the left hand side, you have the the model that is sculpted, digitally sculpted. With no texturing. So, it's just sort of a white clay and on the right it's the beginning phase of texturing and texturing is really interesting I'll talk about it in a little in a little bit. But on the right it's got the first layer of texturing on it and you could already start to see how it starts to come to life, a little bit in terms of looking like a stone. I'm using a software program called Substance Painter that then allows you to layer these images onto the tablet and if you can, then you, it's it's utilizing what are called maps.

Again, something that I just think it's so fascinating which are really just images, they're, they're images in a lot of cases they're actual photographs, so what you're seeing in this case here. This is an actual photograph of concrete or gravel that then gets sort of projected onto this three-dimensional object by the software and that's what gives it the illusion of of texture. Not all of them are actual photographs, some of them are just images. Some of them are just direct paint and on the right hand side, you can see all the layers here. But it's basically just a process of layering, removing, adding different effects. Because it's utilizing maps the software learns where there's a crevice and where there's something that kind of pokes out and when you add the paint and what what have you it responds to that. So here, you can see that the the indentations here are darker because that was, like the dirt layer that, then you can you can manipulate how much dirt is inside of the cavities etc, etc, so. It takes the mesh it reads the mesh and then it allows you then to do whatever you want like I could turn this one into a jade object, I can turn it into whatever as long as I have the images on the left hand side or photographs and then to then put on to the object. And this is actually what it ends up producing. So these are what are called the texture maps and this is where I think it's really interesting in terms of photography because literally what it's doing is it's taking a photograph in this case that a photograph of marble on the left hand side projecting it onto the image and then through the various texture during it produces what are called texture maps and these texture maps then get put on to the object layered. And that's what, then, produces this three-dimensional object that then responds to light so on the left hand side, I'm going a little into the weeds, just kidding it's interesting.

On the left hand side, this is the the color map, so this is really just all the color information from the marble. This is what's called a normal map and in this map they've, I don't know how it works, but that's how the software learns to read some of these colors as light or dark so when I'm using virtual lights it responds to that light, so this is sort of like surface texture and then this is what what is called a roughness map and that that

determines how shiny or how dull certain areas of the image will be and I can, I can control all of these things. Using this software program so I'm doing all of that, and then what it spits out are these these maps that, then I bring into a third software program to then do what is called the rendering. So I'm showing you some of the like very, very, very bad early versions of this just so that you can see the process on the left hand side is what it looked like after I finished texturing it and rendering it using the software program that was used to texture it. And these are my early attempts to figure out well, what do I do with this object now that I've created this tablet I hadn't quite figured out what to do with it yet. And I thought, well, maybe just on a blank background and then I did, that I was like wow that's that's okay it doesn't look that great and I thought, oh right. I can just create these little you know still lives. On the right hand side, you see the very first attempt at these images and you can see there's all kinds of problems right. Out of proportion, the texturing didn't translate correctly, so this one doesn't look like this one, the lighting is all bad. The, the the stand looks very artificial so, but this is my first attempt, and this was like okay, I think I can, I think I can get it to work, but now I've got to find the right software program for it, and at this point I haven't found it yet.

I'm at this in this phase, I moved on to the SEC, to the third software program. I thought okay, this is what I need to learn in order to make what I want. This is a program called redshift that renders, so it takes all of the mesh of all of the maps and it's what allows me to them light and photograph using virtual cameras. And the composition, I can manipulate all of that and I'm so here I'm figuring out the lighting and figuring out obviously you can see the proportions of the marble changes. Trying to figure out composition, but even still there's still a lot of problems here, like, for instance, the where the marble meets the table kind of looks really fake. The pole, the little stands still look really artificial it doesn't have a lot, a lot of texture. So, this is like three, four months of trying to figure this out and in in slowly slowly getting to the place where I finally go here, so on the left hand side is like here I'm getting a little closer I'm getting a little closer to kind of what I really want. And, but there's still some problems but generally speaking it's like I'm happy with with this result. And then on the right hand side is the final version that I've refined the lighting, I've changed the the texture from, from stone to marble. I've changed the composition, a little bit, you can see, the scale of the of the marble stand here has changed a little bit. The pole doesn't look as as fake and again I'm still like very, very amateur at this but there's people that are just really, really good at it. And then, I just wanted you to see kind of what this looks like in, in the in the software, and this is what it looks like in the software. So, you can see the the stone tablet here the marble stand and then this is the kind of 3D world that it lives in. Here's the virtual camera. These rectangles are the lights, so you can see that setup. So, so this setup here has 1,2,3,4,5 lights that then kind of light the whole thing. You can see that they're different different sizes and different shapes. But then that's what, what, then I used to to create all of the the artifacts. It's been an incredibly difficult. It's three different programs that I had to learn. But I have to say that it's been so much fun it's like really, really fun. I am glad that I'm kind of reconnecting with my like photography roots, even though this is more virtual photography but it's, it's just a lot of fun, I can, I can spend hours hours doing it. So that's that's what I've got for everybody, and then I think that we, we have some time for some questions right.

Yes, thank you so much Danny it's a, it's all is just super fascinating to hear you talk more about your work, especially with this work and the process and just even seeing that that last image of just what exactly goes, it's just it's it's incredible so thank you so much. Yeah, we have you know well if anybody has any questions feel free to enter them in the chat or you can you're more than welcome to take yourself off mute and ask Danny yourself. I have a few questions to get us going if folks want to wait a few oh, I see oh yeah and and Juan would you like to kick us off with the question?

Yeah. First Danny, thank you for for that talk I'm, I love the work, and I wanted to start with a question on those spaces of absence in language. Because I mean I studied Spanish and also, art and I know the archives, yes, they are spaces in which there is emptiness and I wanted to ask if you thought about that as constructing that space that is not per se Latin American in itself because I'm, I come from Venezuela and I don't see this being discovered in an archive in Venezuela, like there's no way there is like like machismo would have a let, let a business and even in little you know space. They don't location be appearing, so I was wondering about that about like fulfilling that historical space to.

Um, it's definitely not something that I thought about, in particular, but it could definitely play into that yeah I mean thinking about machismo just in in like Chicano culture is something that is definitely something that I think about and that I that has affected me, of course, just growing up in southern California in an extremely kind of macho homophobic environment. But it's not it's not definitely something that I, that I thought about in terms of Latin America, I was really trying to kind of make in that with that gesture trying to speak to maybe myself and a past in the past right. So like making an object, now that can speak to the sort of former self that seeing making what I would want to like, what I would have wanted to see when I was there and I just thought that language was an interesting way of doing it because it's I I I originally started by looking for actual images of Latino queers in the archive and you know that that's that was fine. But I just didn't think that it was as playful as, it didn't give me the liberty that that language allowed. So that was really kind of where I was, I was thinking about is thinking about addressing a subject that that I could have benefited from seeing them, yeah if that makes sense.

Thank you.

I'll, I have a question for you Danny and we, the I know with the studio visits and then just working with you throughout the COLA process, we talked a lot about the importance of Los Angeles, and in Los Angeles is history and you touched on it a little bit in your talk, but could you speak a little bit more about why Los Angeles and Los Angeles' history is just important point of reference for you and your work?

Yeah. It's yeah, it's always been kind of a subject in my work and either direct ways or roundabout ways, and in this particular case I, the story that gets told, the national story that gets told about the gay rights movement is it's always New York-centric. And nothing

against New York, but that's kind of where it starts, right? Stonewall. Stonewall is sort of beginning point and I just know that that's not true, I know that the Black Cat riots happened two years prior to Stonewall I know that a lot of the major gay rights organizations that started in the 60s started in Los Angeles and San Francisco in California, in general, so there's this whole like west coast erasure that happens when when these stories get told about about the gay rights movement in the United States. So, and that, that then by proxy then its about thinking about.. telling invisible histories, which is what I've always been interested in. Whether it's Los Angeles's invisible history or whether it's Latinx queers' invisible history like that has always just been interested, interesting to me, and then, in particular, I, I kind of went down this road, when I was living in Silverlake. And I had chosen to live in Silverlake I went to graduate school in San Diego and moved back to LA after graduate school. And I particularly chose to live in Silverlake because of its history of being a mix of of Latino immigrant families, you know, Japanese Americans and then that it was a historically gay neighborhood. And, as I lived there, I had already I was you know part of the gentrification yeah I guess you could say but, by the time I moved there, I was already seeing a change and then within the 15 years that I lived there it went completely from being a very prominent and visibly gay neighborhood to being completely gone. So much so that we had a neighbor moved in during the time that was surprised, she said that she got, she got hit on by by a woman at a bar and she was very surprised and I, and I told her well why are you surprised it's the gay neighborhood. And she said no it's not like she just had no idea that, that she was living in what was once a gay neighborhood so that that really struck me as as like this neighborhood has lost its identity. And there was you know, it had one of the largest concentrations of bathhouses in in LA and to me those spaces always seemed as like radical spaces, where we're men were we're redefining kind of love and sex and relationships. And I was just sort of seeing it disappear, and so that just became kind of a natural connection to means is to want to tell that that space that and that story.

Thank you. There oh, I see a hand up.

I'm, I was thinking about you know the, the where people appear and where they don't and you know, especially that tension of all of the kind of fragments that you're working on, and you know things that you can't see. It's archived archaeological remains. things in archives and that it seems I think most or all of the human figures come from those advertisements.

Yeah.

And I just I don't know I'm just curious to hear you talk a little bit more about like what that does to have those human figures there and how you think about what the role of that, I mean this sort of there's like that tension of you know just we were talking about this sort of human element to the intimacy of these unseen or abstract or fragmented histories. Yeah just to hear you reflect on that a bit.

Yeah. Yeah, working with the figures was really weird for me because I've always been, for the last 15 almost 20 years have just been working abstractly, geometric abstraction

really, literally working with space and architecture so to then come to a figure was very strange. And the way that the only way that I can think of, or the way that I've been thinking about it and I don't know if this answers your question, but it the way that I've been thinking about it is, is literally thinking about them as ghosts and thinking about as these ghosts that are trapped in the archive. So, thinking about the archive as this as this as a stultifying kind of container and that what I was trying to do is sort of release them release them from from that archive and from that trap. So that was the way that I kept thinking also about brujeria and like witchcraft is that that's what kept coming to me is that it's like they're ghosts that are trapped there and I want to get them out. And then the average yeah I mean the fact that there are advertisements, I mean the the thing that I just always find interesting is that you see a connection in the books between like literally after after Stonewall all of a sudden, you start seeing these advertisements. So you see the the relationship between capitalism and the gay dollar right, So you see it kind of growing in that period between Stonewall and the AIDS crisis, so it kind of swells in that, in that time period and that's when you start seeing these more explicit ads that, that, that that they started using for bathhouses and you know clearly it's about desire and, and attractiveness and all that, so it just. But yeah the figures are a they're odd for me.

Oh, I don't think they're odd.

For me, they are.

Yeah.

Yeah and it's interesting that the the source imagery is all you know it's drawings, line drawings it's not. They're not photographs right, right we're anonymous all right all right.

yeah yeah.

JB.

Hi Danny, I, first, well, I have a comment and a question, and so my comment first is just to say how much I appreciate your like narrating the story of the creation and then kind of highlighting some of what were kind of failures right. As someone who fails all the time, I really appreciate that kind of story. My question is, is about how you you've been creating monuments in a moment when monuments are being toppled all over the place right and I'm wondering about how that context, may have informed your decisions about how and when to create monuments.

Hmm. Yeah I. That's interesting um, I mean I've always been interested in in well okay. In the same way that I've made drawings of architecture, new buildings and my interest isn't really in the buildings and isn't really in architecture it's that that's it's a proxy to talk about the public space right It's it's a proxy to talk about, to talk about public history right, so in a similar way, I think memorials.. I've always been interested in memorials and and have made drawings, like the early work that I was doing in 2010 I thought of as sort of

abandoned memorials. And, and, and thinking about the way that the memorials serves it's supposed to serve to commemorate, to remember. It's sort of a mark in space and time you know for for a particular story, but then it's also to think about: well what gets a memorial and what doesn't. What gets a monument and what doesn't right and that's sort of like the way that I thought about about the work is that that I'm, and on one hand, was creating memorials and monuments that that I wanted to see. So yeah, I don't know in terms of like, I can tell you that that I, and I don't know if this answers your question either, but I can tell you that I'm, I've, I'm uncomfortable with the way that the discourse around monuments in this country has occurred. I'm, I'm a believer that that the monuments that have been toppled and taken taken down that that's actually the wrong move, I think that that the right move would be to intervene in some way in the monument. Because then it's just another form of erasure, then we're just sort of forgetting that we once had a monument to sort of a racist white supremacist and and then, how do we then advance from that. I would much rather see our artistic intervention in those monuments and the way that I think sometimes makeshift memorials do, right. I'm thinking about maybe even some of the George Floyd like memorials and monuments, the way that artists can intervene in these monuments, so that you have the original so they have a context, but then there's a critical intervention in them and and maybe that's the way that I'm thinking about monuments. Is, is really is more of a critical intervention and not just a passive acceptance of what monuments are supposed to do, because I think they're very problematic in a lot of different ways. So I don't know if that gets to it a little bit.

Okay, thank you Danny. There's a question in the chat or comment question from Sami it said, congratulations on the work are you planning to exhibit the virtual art pieces in the metaverse?

Um, that's not something that I've thought about necessarily. I like, I think that there is a tension that exists where you're seeing the images in, in, in in real life, but that they only exist in virtual and that that kind of play between what is what's in the real world, and what is not it's kind of interesting so just putting it in the metaverse and again, I haven't thought about it, but, but I like this idea of it existing and slipping in and out of the real in the virtual. I'm exploring 3D printing with some of them, and so that seems kind of interesting because there's this tension again between making making a virtual imaginary object, making it real, these are images so there's, I don't know, there's just something more interesting to me about that that I haven't thought about the metaverse necessarily. I wouldn't say no, then I guess. There's the right context for it.

Hey, I think you touched on the last question, I was going to ask you, which is just what are you, what are you really excited to continue working on with this with this new work and, if you could just whatever you feel comfortable sharing with yeah next steps, and all that.

So, at this point I'm just making a lot more. I feel like the the process opened up a lot of possibilities for making stuff and I'm having a lot of fun, making it. So I'm just going to keep making more like I said I want to explore 3D printing and see what the possibility

is there in terms of bringing them out of the virtual space and into the real space. I'm also working on a, on a related but separate project called *Watchqueen*, which takes the Laud Humphreys studies and and creates a video narrative out of it so I'm, I'm creating taking those maps and creating imaginary ruins that are based off of his maps of the bathhouses and then using video game software and creating these these massive worlds that that I'm then filming and then have voiceover narration that, that basically tells the story of of Laud Humphreys and his and his sort of observations. So that's a project that is in progress. It's another software program that I had to learn, so it's been it's been quite challenging but with these I'm just gonna keep making them because they're kind of fun. And I keep finding I have a whole collection of of archival documents that I found that I just keep getting new ideas for and so yeah that's what I'll be working on.

Great, I just I know when we spoke earlier this week I loved your comment about just how you're, you're looking at what you're seeing in your daily life and you're just like already picturing how to render it. Oh yeah yeah.

I was driving down the freeway and there was like a boulder on the on the side of the road, and like I just kept wanting to click it and have little like arrows that can move it. But because I was so in that like space that everything seemed like clickable and that's when I thought okay, I have to take a break from this. It's getting too weird you know.

Well, I. I'm not sure if we just make sure nobody has a hand up nope I'm not seeing any hands up but um does anybody else have any other questions for for Danny or? Going once, twice. cool well, I think we can we can end it here Danny, thank you so much for just just really just fantastic work and talk on your just incredibly generous and. Just it's really it's really just mentioned it before but it's really been an honor and privilege to be able to work with you and to see your work. Up close as you've been creating it for for COLA and beyond. So just thank you so much, and all lots of just Danny was also very generous and sent a, shared a few resources that we just put in the chat. So if you'd like to learn a little bit more or you know, help get inside Danny's head a little bit more with the inspiration feel free to copy that. And we'll, so be sure to send that out, as well as a link to the recording as soon as it's available.

And a big thank you to Jamie who introduced me to Saidiya Hartman which was just so amazing and right up my alley. So yeah, thank you Jamie.

Well, and I just I also just want to thank, our Stephanie who's also part of the LAMAG team here today, and then also just the Department on Disability. Hillary, Nicole, Cindy, thank you so much for being here and providing the sign language interpreting services and live captioning. It's always a pleasure to work with the Department on Disability and I think yeah I think we can wrap it up here, so thank you so much, everyone and for being here and stay tuned for more. I'm gonna stop recording now.

Thanks everyone yeah.

First of all.

Thank you everyone.