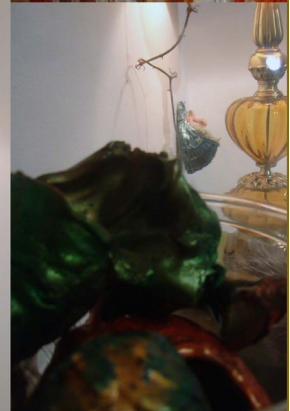
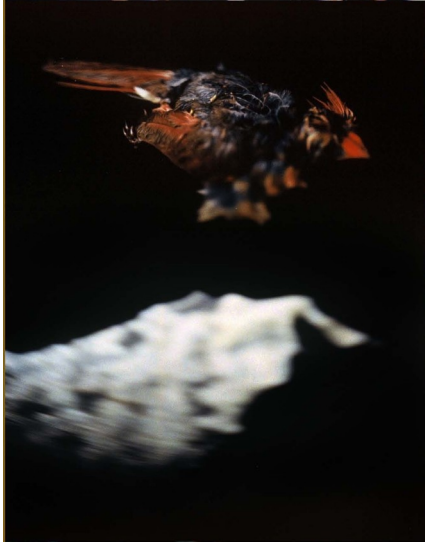


Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien

trish@wampa.net
361-563-9183



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien
Collaborative Artists' Statement

All animals (fur, bone, specimens, etc.) were acquired post-mortem. The artists were not directly or indirectly involved in any of the animals' deaths. All taxidermy was performed solely by the artists unless otherwise indicated.

Objects have long served as a profound emotional comfort to us, often creating a range of surrogate relationships. We continually acquire nostalgic items, compensating for what we have lost or never had. By surrounding ourselves with these objects in our homes and daily lives, we are developing an intimacy and a level of comfort that borders a fantasy life. These possessions represent past memories, our personal histories, and reflect the events in life that shaped our aesthetic. Domestic objects also indicate an idealism; the things we want and want to be. In our private environments, seemingly mundane trinkets and miscellany become trophies and talismans, validating our self image by reflecting our ideal pasts and futures.

In similar fashion, we have nurtured a 'collection' of pets as they have wandered into our lives, needing care and comfort. As we became more invested in these animals, every stray began to simulate the same potential emotional burden. An overwhelming anxiety pervaded each incident of finding an abandoned animal. This ever-present responsibility created a compulsion to care for the remains of the dead animals we came across as well. Making art allows us to keep an animal preserved, conjointly caring for a neglected animal, elevating a moment, and adding to our domestic imaginarium.

Animal philosophies are rife with contradictions brought about by our childhood idolatry of animals and our societal use and slaughter of them. Commixing these extremes, we create a dream-like exposé of our haunted relationships to animals. We compose vignettes using objects we covet in order to construct situations that provoke reflection on the subjective and selective ways that people view these creatures. By intertwining our escalating domestic fetishes and increasing beastly burdens, we collect nests for them to dwell, treasuring these animals in a way that assuages us and inspires empathy from the viewer.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Story Time**, *Creature Comfort*, 2011, Vintage pandas, animal bones (including horses, coyote, dolphin), found objects



Creature Comfort

2011-present

We were invited onto an acquaintance's land to investigate a ravine full of horse skeletons. Rumor is that the previous land owners disposed of their horses there when they died of starvation. We excavated over 20 horse skeletons alongside a trashed washing machine, garden hoses, and other refuse. The horse bones were added to our preexisting found- bone collection but greatly increased its overwhelming horror and impact. "Story Time" forbodes childhood's enchantment of animals with adulthood's necessary repudiation.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Bird Nest**, *Imaginarium*, 2011, polymer clay, mixed media, embroidery thread, found object (nest)



We found what was once an ideal trophy mount deteriorating on the floor of a junk shop. Its busted seams, exposed stuffing, and torn, ragged ears evoked a similar level of pity in us as would finding a neglected pet. We were motivated to save this discarded animal in such a way to evoke pity, horror, and beauty in a viewer as it had been stirred in us. We had differing visions of how to use the broken seams on the hide: one of us saw the seams busting with puffed pink foam while the other planned to fill the gaps with eggs and decay. Our collaboration resulted in an ugly-beautiful aesthetic that communicates our concept better than either idea alone.

Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Hoarder**, *Imaginarium*, 2011, found deer mount, polymer clay, mixed media



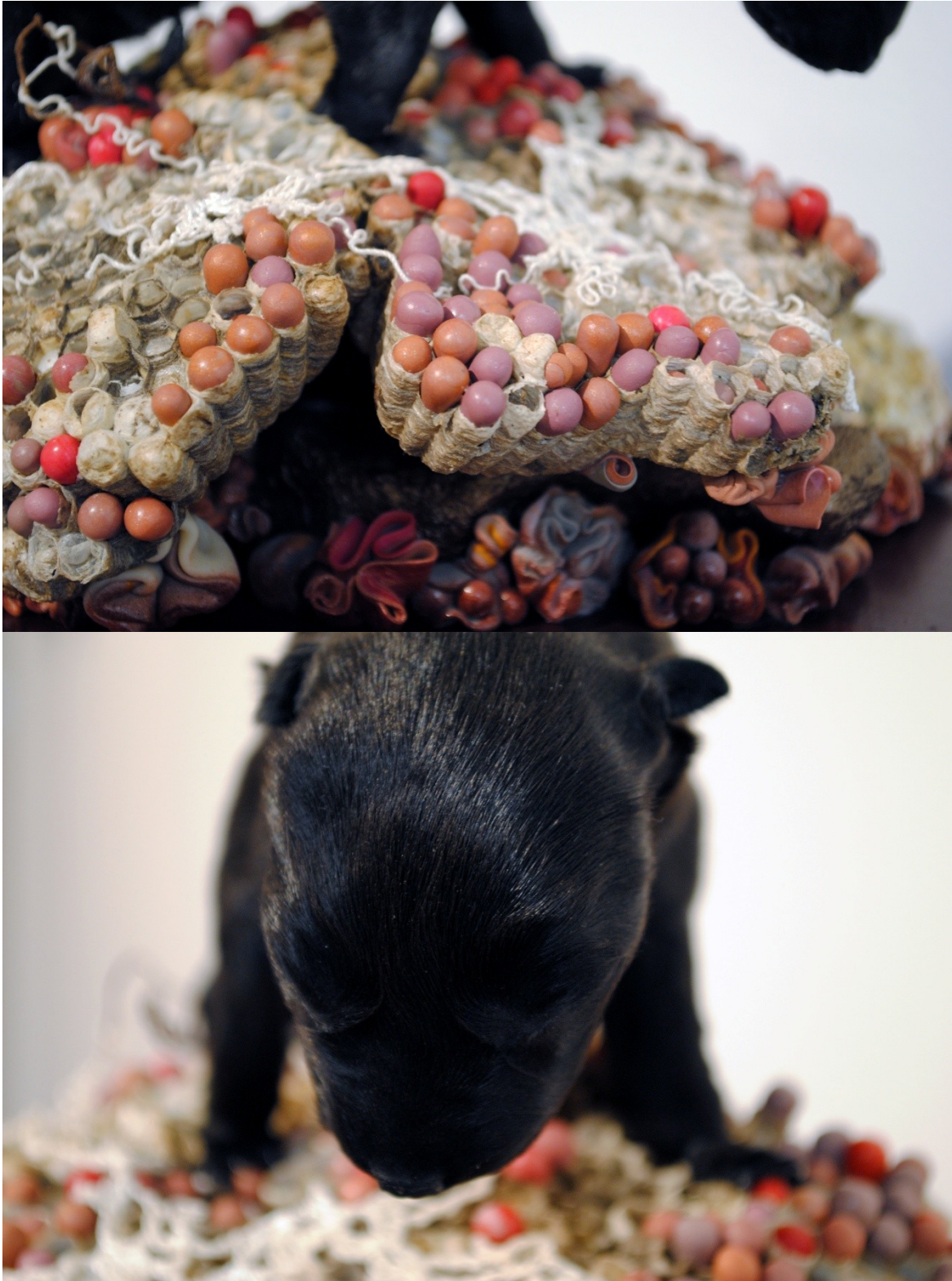
Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Hoarder*, details



In dealing with the loss and anxieties over our pets' health, we began a collection of animal remains to in an effort to preserve each animal's existence and our memory. This two-day old puppy was given to us after she died from natural causes. Being the runt of the litter, she was born unhealthy and was not able to survive. Our desire was to show the preciousness, sadness, and helplessness in seeing a baby animal die. We wanted to give her a sense of identity (a female dog, hence the bow around her tail) and a safe, nested place where the sight of this poor creature induces empathy and awe. Process: Dry-mount taxidermy performed solely by the artists. Process entails removing and preserving the pelt of an animal and sewing it over a hand-sculpted foam and clay form.

Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Puppy**, *Animals and Objects*, 2011, taxidermy, mixed media, polymer clay, and found objects, 16"x9"x9"

Animal acquired post-mortem. Taxidermy performed solely by the artists.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Puppy*, details



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Prize*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, stoneware 'carrot', glaze, found objects and mixed media, 3'x8'x1.5'



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, Above Left: ***Fur***, Imaginarium, 2011, found furs and objects. Above Right: ***Paragon***, *Creature Comfort*, 2011, stoneware, glaze, polymer clay, found objects, mixed media. Bottom: ***Paragon***, detail



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Opossum**, *Animals and Objects*, 2011, taxidermy, mixed media, earthenware 'antler' and pinch pots (in vitrine), stuffed fabric 'possums, and found objects, 3'x8'x1.5'
Taxidermy performed solely by the artists. Animal acquired post-mortem.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Opossum*, details



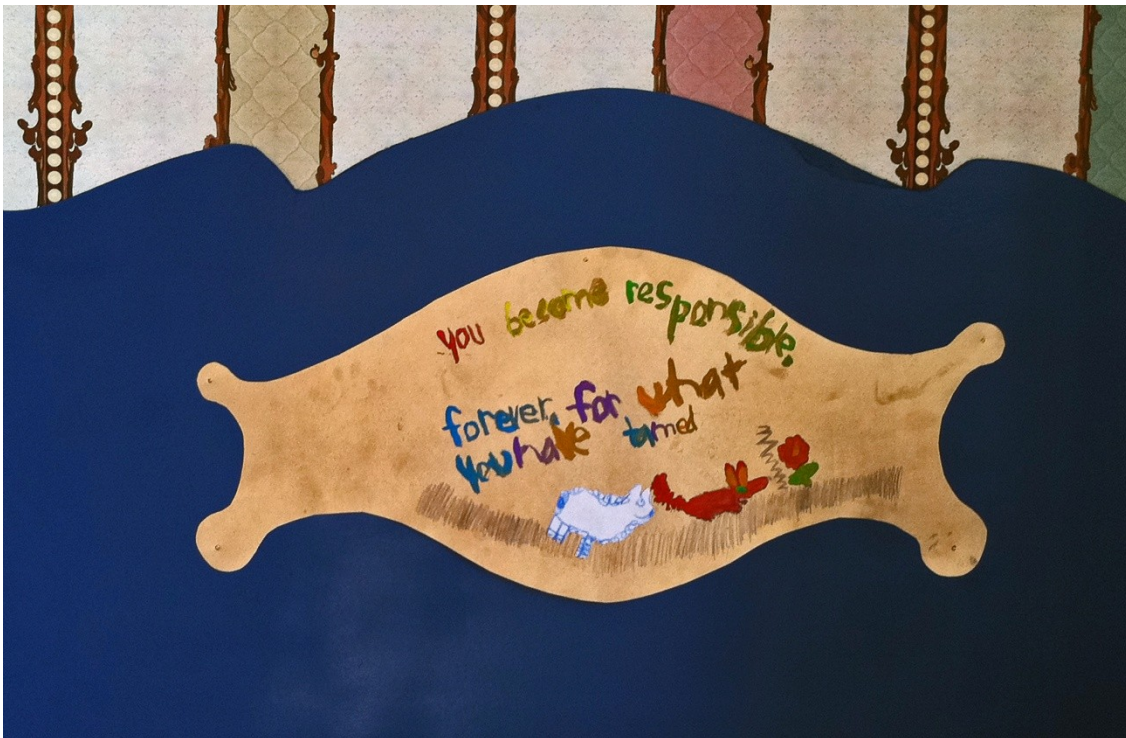
Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, ***Opossum (Child's Room)***, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, Taxidermied opossum, stone-ware 'stuffed' animals, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), polymer clay, fabric, found objects, mixed media

Top Image: Installation view, Bottom images: details

Wallpaper design: Trish Igo

Taxidermy performed solely by the artists. Animal acquired post-mortem.

Creature Comfort
2011-present



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Opossum (Child's Room)*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, installation details
 Top left: Trish Igo, *Stuffed Animals*, 2012, Slab-constructed stoneware clay, glaze (cone 6 oxidation)
 Top right: Trish Igo, *Stuffed Lambie*, 2012, Slab-constructed stoneware clay, glaze (cone 6 oxidation)
 Bottom: Bed mural illustrated by Eva Bechtol, request of artists. "You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed"—the Little Prince



Trish Igo, *Velveteen Rabbit*, 2012, Slab-constructed stoneware clay, glaze (cone 6 oxidation)



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Opossum (Child's Room)*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, installation details

Top Image: Trish Igo, *Stuffed Elephant*, 2012, Slab-constructed stoneware clay, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), mixed media

Bottom image: Trish Igo, *Velveteen Rabbit*, installation view

Trish Igo, *Animal Circus Wallpaper for Child's Room*, Digital print designed in Adobe Photoshop



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Carnival Prizes**, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, Preserved fish, stoneware clay, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), polymer clay, fabric (stuffed animals), found objects, mixed media

Installation and detail views:

Middle left: Igo and O'Brien installation detail view, (including Igo's **Animal Mummies**, Igo and O'Brien's **Animal Rockers**, Igo's Prize Ribbons and O'Brien's Mums)

Middle center: Trish Igo, **Animal Mummies (bunnies)**, and **Animal Prize Ribbon**, 2012, stoneware, glaze

Middle right: Igo and O'Brien, **Animal Prize Rockers (swans)**, 2012, stoneware, glaze

Bottom: Trish Igo, **Melting Animal Cups**, 2011, stoneware, glaze



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Carnival Prizes*, details

Top image: Trish Igo, *Animal Mummy (cat)*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, stoneware (assembled and trimmed wheel-thrown pieces), glaze (cone 6 oxidation)

Bottom image: Igo and O'Brien, *Animal Prize Rockers (kittens)*, 2012, stoneware, glaze



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Carnival Prizes*, details
Animal Prize Rockers (swans), 2012, stoneware, glaze, mixed media



Inspired by the indulgence and fetishism of corsages and homecoming mums, we created a corsage that celebrates an animal type rather than a person or event. By referencing the nostalgic qualities of animal collectibles, "Rabbit Corsage" is meant to induce a dream-like revelry of a particularly vulnerable creature.

Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Carnival Prizes*, details

Rabbit Corsage, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, stoneware, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), polymer clay, mixed media

Creature Comfort

2011-present



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Carnival Prizes*, details

Jill O'Brien, *Stuffed Animal Dummies*, 2012, fabric, mixed media



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Carnival Prizes*, details

Trish Igo, *Stuffed Ring Toss Animals*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, polymer clay, fabric, mixed media

Top: detail, Bottom left: *Stuffed Ring Toss Fox*, Bottom Right: installation view



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Canoe*, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, tanned squirrel hides, collected and preserved sea whips, stoneware, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), woven embroidery thread, sewn, borrowed, and collected stuffed animals, found objects, mixed media
All animals acquired post-mortem
Canoe built by Gerry Hamilton and Trish Igo



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Canoe*, detail

Creature Comfort

2011-present



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Velveteen Goat**, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, taxidermy, stoneware, glaze (cone 6 oxidation), fabric, found objects, mixed media

Taxidermy performed solely by the artists

Animal acquired post-mortem

While exploring on a country road, we found the head of a decapitated pig. The rope was strung through its jaws, leading us to believe that it had fallen from a nearby fence post, where it was most likely mounted as a trophy from someone's latest hunt. We present the found object as is, in contrast to the formal setting to provoke conflicting thoughts on the manner of death of this wild animal.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, **Pig Head**, *Creature Comfort*, 2012, Found object
Animal acquired post-mortem

Artist's Statement for body of work, "Crowd of Drifters"

Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien

Crowd of Drifters: Photographs and Collections

An animal cannot, so far as we know, transcend its suffering. A helpless elephant hunted by sharpshooters waiting by the water hole, a deer fleeing the hunter or dying on a highway, a pig or lamb or calf trapped amid the bedlam—they cannot draw meaning from their hardship, or find refuge in God, or pray for deliverance. That still leaves the *enduring* of it, the deprivation and fear and panic and loneliness. We know those feelings too.

Animals are ideal victims of human violence. In all interactions between animals and our society they are victimized, sometimes intentionally and more often, indiscriminately. Their complete helplessness and inability to ask, complain, or beg for consideration underscores their need for our mercy. Our superiority in reason and industry charges us with moral compassion and responsibility for their quality of life.

We believe it may be our awareness of this burden that has instilled our drive to produce art. Because pets were present throughout our childhoods, we have experienced the cycle of love, attachment, and loss and have come to design our lives around this painful knowledge. Animals are the most common experience of death in our lives and therefore become a powerful symbol for our futility in protecting those we love from harm, as well as dealing with our own mortality. These animals—pets, strays, orphans, injured or dying wildlife, and wildings killed by man's invasion all serve as horrid reminders of the complete loss every living thing will eventually suffer.

Despite the inevitable outcome, we continue to adopt and care for animals. With every animal we bring into our homes, we multiply our responsibilities and anxieties about them, and subconsciously about death. The subjugation of animals by mankind is therefore the most threatening emotional burden in our lives.

Just as we adopt animals we consider abused and unwanted, we adopt the dead animals that mankind has struck down and forgotten. It is the emotional distance between ourselves and these animals we never knew in life that makes our attraction to their physicality of death an easier one to explore. We collect the animals, name them, photograph them, prepare them for resting, and keep a physical part of them with us for remembrance. We have created our own methods of ritual that serve as respect towards the animal and as comfort to ourselves.

Scully, Matthew. *Dominion*. St. Martin's Griffin: New York, 2002.

"Crowd of Drifters"

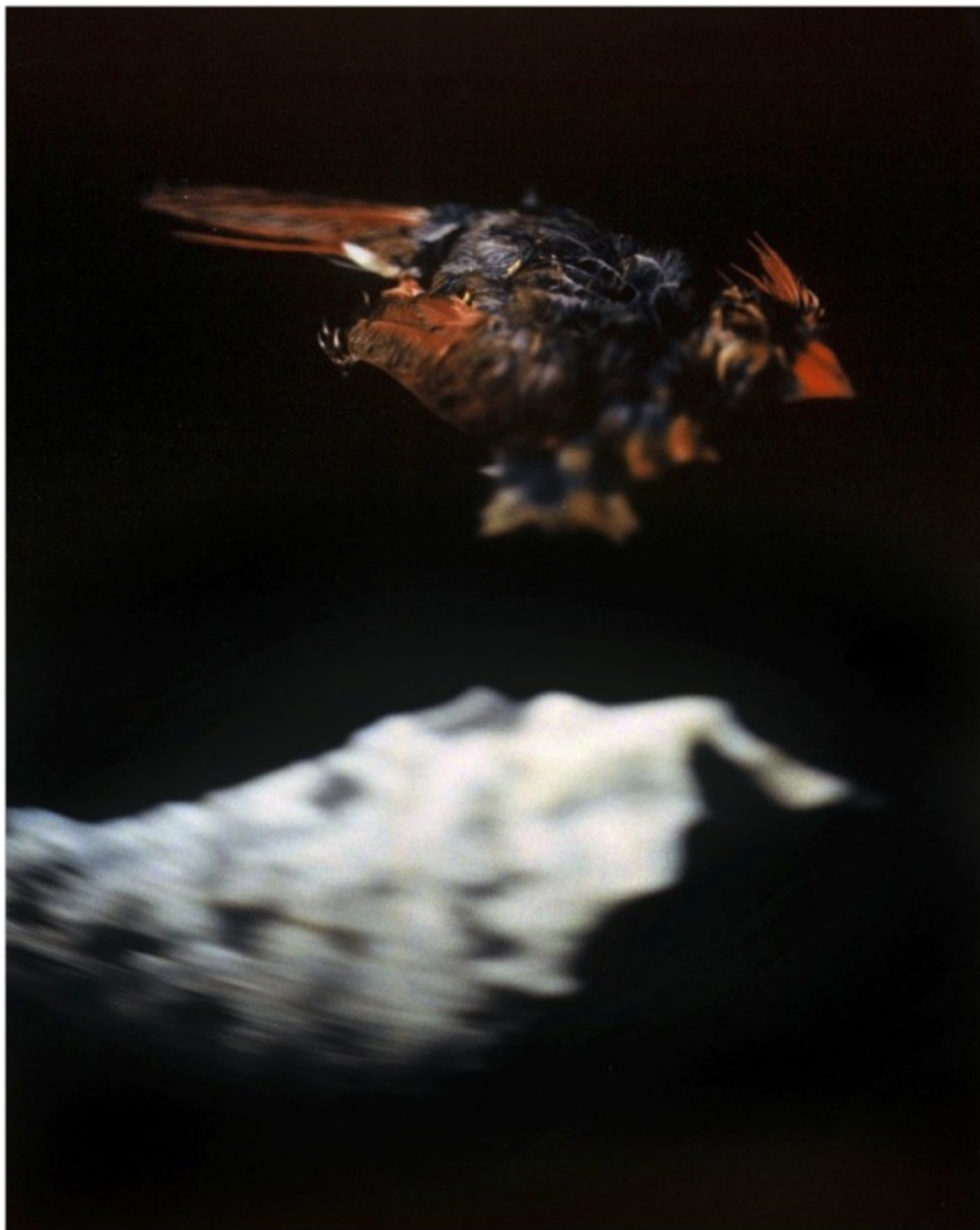
2004-2011



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, Above: "**Mutiny in Heaven**", *Crowd of Drifters*, 2005, chromogenic print, 40"x50"
Below: **Armadillo I**, *Hope Chest Series*, 2004, chromogenic print, 4"x5"

"Crowd of Drifters"

2004-2011



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Cardinal I*, *Hope Chest Series*, 2005, chromogenic print, 4"x5"



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Lizard I*, *Hope Chest Series*, 2005, chromogenic print, 4"x5"

"Crowd of Drifters"

2004-2011

"Crowd of Drifters"

2004-2011



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien,

Top: "***Eyepennies***", *Crowd of Drifters*, 2005, chromogenic print, 20"x16"

Bottom left: : "***Torn Green Velvet Eyes***", *Crowd of Drifters*, 2005, chromogenic print, 20"x16",

Bottom right: ***Armadillo IV***, *Hope Chest Series*, 2005, chromogenic print, 4"x5"



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, ***Crowd of Drifters***, installation views and details, 2005

Top left: Hope Chest Series and Trophy Series,

Top right: Hope Chest Series detail,

Middle left: Process Grid and Trophy Series,

Middle right: Process Grid, detail, ('take')

Bottom left: Process Grid, detail ('bundle'),

Bottom right: Process Grid, detail ('find')

"Crowd of Drifters"
2004-2011




Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Dove I*, *Hope Chest Series*, 2010, earthenware clay, glaze, taxidermy, digital print, found objects, mixed media

"Crowd of Drifters"

2004-2011

"Crowd of Drifters"

2004-2011






still, life.

a film by

tania khalaf
meta newhouse

still, life.

Jill O'Brien and Trish Igo are art students, who collect dead animals found on the side of the road, and then document them through still photography. Their goal is not to shock, but rather to take something shocking and create something meaningful and beautiful from it. This film shows the process itself, which is more like performance art, with elaborate rituals such as "hunting" for the animals, naming them, photographing them and doing a "take" (which is removing a part of the bodies as a keepsake.) See how these artists try to confront the mystery of death by documenting lives once lived.

medium
Digital Video

running time
15 minutes, 15 seconds

direction, camera, and editing
Tania Khalaf, Meta Newhouse

featured artists
Trish Igo, Jill O'Brien

school
University of North Texas

Copyright © 2005 Four Point Productions, Tania Khalaf, Meta Newhouse

still, life.	14 minutes OF enlightenment
<p>Directors Tania Khalaf and Meta Newhouse are able to present the morbid subject matter in a more humane light. The film focuses on the almost maternal pains that O'Brien and Igo go through to give these cast-aside creatures the dignity they wouldn't find elsewhere. This gives the film a sweetness that draws the viewer back in from the utter shock of two girls playing with cadavers.</p> <p>— THE DAILY TEXAN</p>	
THE MEANING OF LIFE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD	

WINNER BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY-AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL2005

Still, life. 2005. Tania Khalaf and Meta Newhouse, Four Point Productions. Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien are the subject of an award-winning documentary short.

"...I kept venturing back further, becoming more scared and sick as I thought about my old pets I somehow had forgotten. All my animals were in this one room on several tables. Glass and plastic cages had fused themselves together, and plenty had plastic tunnels filled with water, debris, and pieces of hamsters that learned to live independently of an entire animal. Some lived in water; some were just buried in dry heaps of bedding and fur. Some reproduced in abominable ways—some were barely alive. They were abandoned by me and suffering at my hand..."

--artist 1

"...My shelves are stuffed with nostalgic objects and toys and feelings from childhood. All the furniture is the yellow and gold girl-set and my blue toy chest is there and full of wonderful possessions. My ferrets are running around, happily and mischievously investigating these stacks of socks and toys...I search the bedroom and notice that it turns into a haphazard lab with tanks and aquariums and buckets all clumped together with tunnels and filters. I see Charlie. Her hair is gone and her skin is translucent and mucousy. I see Sammy in a filthy tank, laying in an inch of water. He too is bloated and hairless, and as I look in, horrified, his red eyes roll toward me accusingly and full of hate..."

--artist 2

This installation is based on the pet-anxiety dreams that we both share. In discussing and relating our dreams to each other, we discovered that our pet dreams had a myriad of obscure details in common. We began to investigate our lifestyles and our pasts for clues to their origins and meanings. The dreams all seem to revolve around the burden that our pets have on us emotionally, our fears of neglecting them, and the guilt that we have from feeling so overwhelmed by our responsibilities to them. In the dreams, these emotions are delivered by horrible imagery of abuse or neglect in bizarrely nostalgic settings and past places.

We believe that these dreams we share are not only inspired by the fact that we own and adopt pets as we have over our life, but also by the fact that we are both collectors and have a distinct need to collect, categorize, and organize things that we find and own. We view our mundane findings as relics and our collections as rituals. We obtain, keep, treasure, and are simultaneously plagued by the endless stacks, piles and shelves of objects and oddities that we can't seem to let go. Caring for and living with the objects and pets we are compelled to keep can instigate an overwhelming cycle of anxiety. We believe this sense of anxiety is most powerful when it is presented in our dreams.

Our work aims to replicate these dreams. Each part of the installation uses ceramics, plastics, and mechanized media amidst found objects and furniture to communicate a specific feeling or memory that we have experienced in dreams of animals. We arrange the show in a narrative format and create transitions to show the structure of dreams, moving from one idea or scene into another. The store, disintegrating from a perfect merchandise utopia into an absurd and horrific conglomeration of objects, false animals, and real specimens is meant to illustrate that particular feeling in a dream or nightmare when things begin to feel horribly wrong. The uncanny we experience in dreams is so unsettling because it best simulates those moments in our routine life where a surreal shock in the everyday reminds us subconsciously of our impending mortality. The pet dreams show us that regardless of how well we tend to our responsibilities to our loved ones, we can never prevent their deaths, or our own.



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, Top Image: *Pet Dreams*, 2006, installation view of "store" and "dream transition". Bottom image: "store" details, Trish Igo, *Perfect Pets*, 2006, polymer clay, printed labels, mixed media, found objects



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2006, details of "store" and "dream transition"

Top image: Jill O'Brien, *Euers*, stoneware, glaze, mixed media, found objects

Bottom image: Trish Igo, *Deep Freezer*, 2006, earthenware, glaze, mixed media, found objects

Pet Dreams

2005-2006



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2006, details of "dream transition"

Top Image: **Yarn cocoons**, preserved specimen, stoneware, earthenware, glaze, mixed media, found objects

Bottom Image: **Displayed objects**, earthenware, glaze, found objects

Pet Dreams

2005-2006



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2005, details of "dream transition"
Trish Igo, *Baggage*, 2006, earthenware, glaze, mixed media, found objects



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2005
 Top Image: installation view of "bedroom",
 Bottom Image: "bedroom" details, found objects



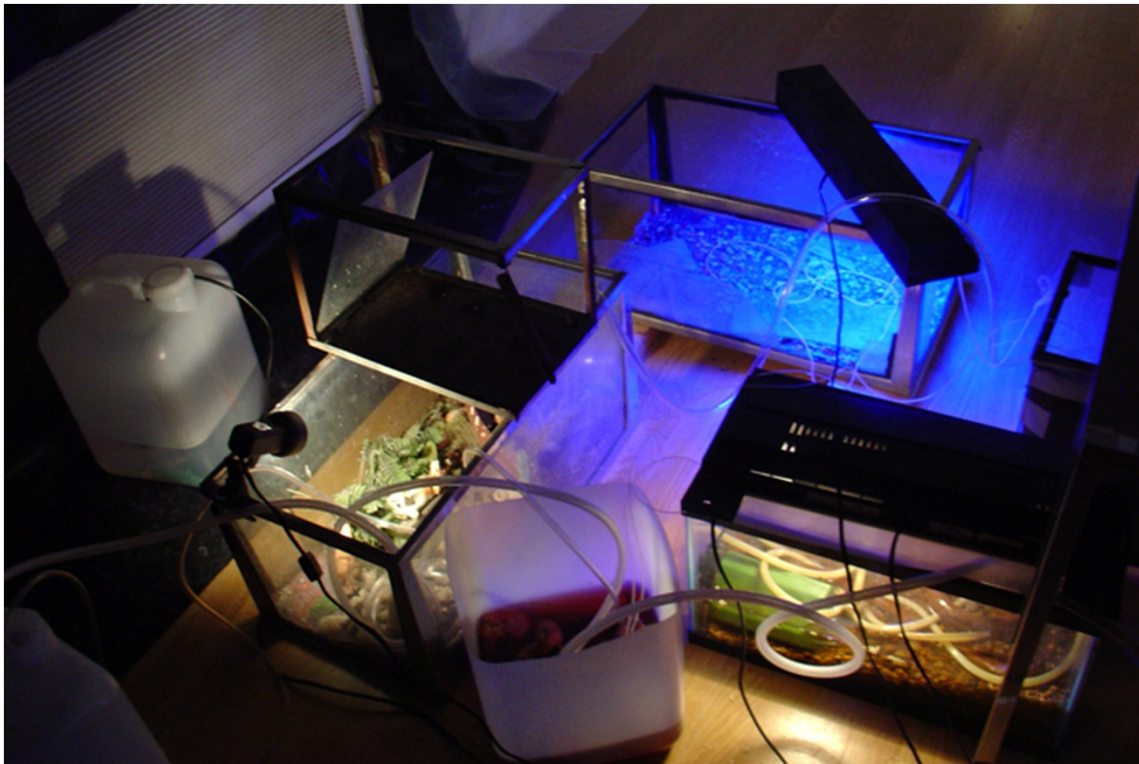
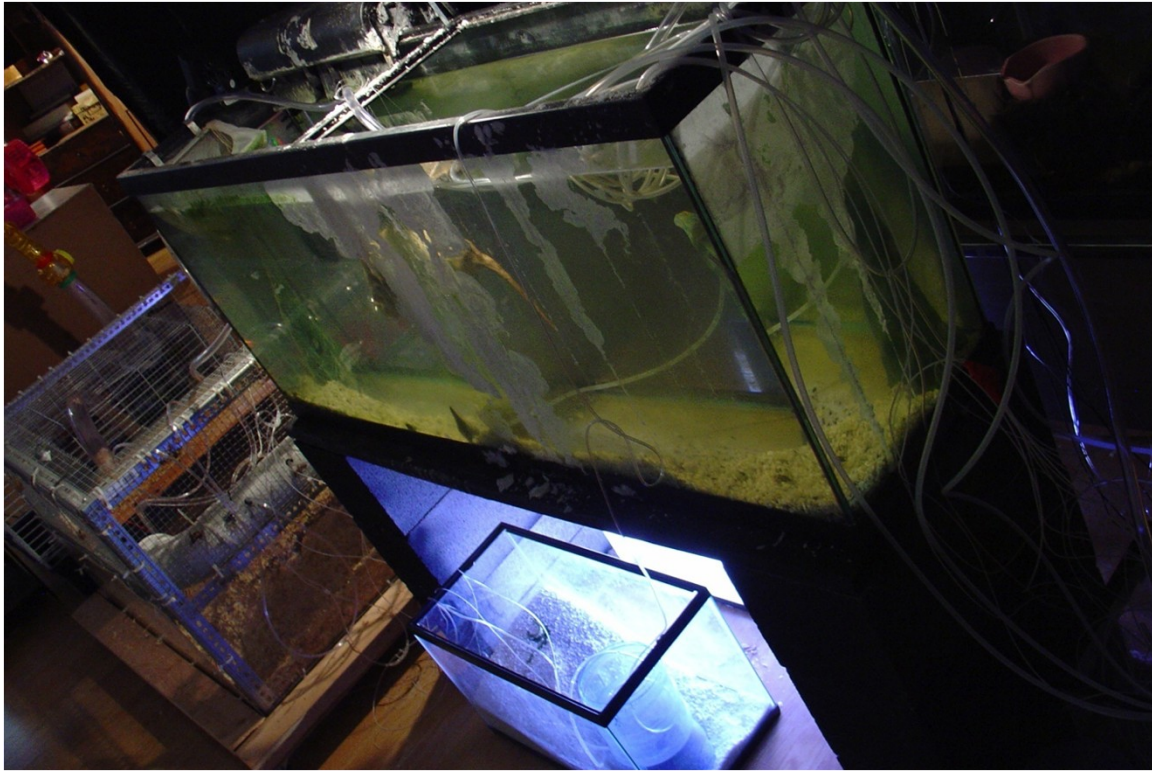
Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2006

Top Image: installation view of "lab"

Bottom image: Trish Igo, *Drowned Ferret*, 2006, earthenware, glaze, mixed media, found objects

Pet Dreams

2005-2006



Trish Igo and Jill O'Brien, *Pet Dreams*, 2006, details of "lab"