



Onloaded: Ben Peck

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There is no waste in nature. Leaves that fall nurture the soil which gives life to plants which are taken up by animals. This energy cycles through the food chain continuously. All of creation functions with such

perfection yet man/woman seems to have strayed.

Human existence operates with the same brilliant interconnectedness, but our actions are flawed. Something has happened that separated us from the ceaseless perfection that all other organisms hold. I make art about this. I make art to discuss this conflict.

All images in this exhibition are from the Rio Salado area, a stretch of the Salt River that runs through the Valley. These images specifically were taken between Central and 7th Avenue, south of Buckeye Road. Along this stretch several storm sewers pour into the river bed a mixture of rain and whatever gets washed off the streets. After a heavy rain it is not uncommon to find plastic bags, cups, ribbon, shoes, etc., 8 feet high in the trees, deposited there as the water retreats.

During my hikes here I have seen animals that have called this place home long before Phoenix was settled. I have seen birds like the Blue Heron and Burrowing Owl inhabit this space, a 5 minute drive from downtown Phoenix. Sometimes I leave this place electrified with the beauty of this persistence. Other times I am ruined by our evident brokenness. The devastation is acute, but the redemption and renewal is prevalent. The area is heavy with the active collision of man and nature.

My time in Rio Salado has left me with a deep sense of responsibility. The sinfulness of our culture has widened the gap between humans and the natural world. I am just as guilty. As an inhabitant of this city, a member of this culture, a human, I am just as broken as the rest. My concern for the natural environment is valid, biblical really, as God called man to be caretakers of his creation, and we fall short in such huge ways.

I make art because I am responsible. I must respond.

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