



DAVID RATHMAN

MARK MOORE GALLERY | *STATEMENTS*

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Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduces a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

David Rathman's mottled watercolors illustrate iconic emblems of strength and struggle, luminary and the underdog. Loosely rendered scenes beckon to their pop cultural origins – films, album covers and advertisements alike – while also acting as collated excerpts from a lost Americana memoir. Mirage-like figures seem pulled from the hazy recesses of a sentimental male mind, or from the filmic cutting room floor as Rathman delineates composites of the modern idol. Cowboys, rock stars, athletes, and race cars craft bittersweet vignettes that grapple with notions of sexuality, faith, mortality and nostalgia.

Rathman (b. 1958) received his BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MN). He has exhibited at such institutions as Larissa Goldston Gallery (NY), Contemporary Arts Museum (TX), Walker Art Center (MN), Arts Center of St. Petersburg (FL) and Mary Goldman Gallery (CA). His work is featured in fifteen public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art (NY), J. Paul Getty Museum (CA) and the Art Institute of Chicago (IL), to name a few. Rathman will be the subject of a career survey at the Rochester Art Center (MN) opening September 21, 2013. Rathman is also represented by Larissa Goldston Gallery (NY). He lives and works in Minneapolis.



DAVID RATHMAN

Interview by: Marielos Zeka, Mark Moore Gallery

Considering your background in printmaking, what led you away from that technique and towards working with watercolor as your primary medium?

I like both mediums, I still do printmaking. I like the fact that even though they are very different mediums I can work in stages and sequences as I develop an image.

Apparent in your work is a type of tension between the soft fluid nature of watercolor and the rough masculinity of your subject matter (which includes high school football players, military vehicles, cowboys, and boxers). How did you come to depict such contrasting subjects in watercolor?

That was never planned or strategized, but it is a nice, surprising contrast: the rough nature of a lot of my subject matter with the beautiful blooming washes of watercolor. Some people still associate watercolor with wispy florals and fuzzy landscapes. It can also be fierce, abrupt, and rude.

Your newest video, *Strange Arithmetic*, begins with the arrival of ghostly figures into an old Western town depicted in a monochromatic scale of blues and

Q&A

then browns. What is the central narrative of the project? How does your changing palette within the video function?

My video is an homage to all the fine westerns I have enjoyed over the years. It's a tribute and an embrace. Visually I wanted something that was very fluid, layered, ambiguous. There is a sense of narrative and context, but primarily I wanted the imagery and audio to transport a viewer to a primal, ethereal place. It's quite fleeting and evocative, and it also feels like you're in very specific physical and emotional spaces.

The text in your paintings read like captions or cinematic voice-overs, yet some paintings are left without language. How do you choose which works will include text? And from where do you source these statements?

That's a serious consideration for me....to write directly into the piece or not. The words and texts function on a couple of levels, as captions, as conversation, as internal dialogue, and as declarations and laments. When I do employ the words in a drawing I see it as content but also as graphic marks that have to work in tandem with the other strokes, washes, and shapes. When I don't use text directly in a piece its because I want the

painting to stay open and outside of definition and comment. I use my titles and captions to infuse poetry, confusion, humor, and despair. The words might run in concert with the imagery, or they might suggest something entirely off-kilter in conflict with the subject. I cull my words and texts from songs, movie dialogue, conversation and books.

Your work seemingly comments on the state of masculinity, mostly pointing to a sense of bruised egos and hubris with a mixture of vulnerability and longing. Do you see your work as a comment on the past and/or current state of the male psyche?

No I really don't. I don't conceptualize or think about that. To me it's more direct, it's about me, other men and boys I've known. It's about profiles and projections of men we've seen in sports media and on movie screens. It's about internal and outward struggles, conflict, resolution, denial, being a participant and a follower. Conquest and vulnerability...

With this new body of work, there is more of a renewed focus on the Western theme and cowboy vignettes. Is there a particular reason for this?

I wanted to do another all-western show, possibly my last. I love doing this work, and will continue to do so, a couple of pieces every year. Working for this show has been very exciting and immersive for me to bury myself in my source materials and go at it again. With the intention that the

exhibit be tightly focused, western watercolors and then the film. I truly love the western; I think my drawings and paintings approach it with elegy and parody. I will continue with my touchstone subjects, athletes, cars and trucks, arranged objects, and yes the cowboys.

In the past, you have worked with found imagery from film and also from image searches on Google. Are you still utilizing this type of source material? Have you found other image sharing sites such as Flickr and Tumblr helpful as well?

I do use the internet for general image searches. Also I am taking more and more of my own photos for source material. Flickr used to be good when it was more authentic and amateurish. Now everybody has a pro camera and submits overly composed and photo-shopped imagery. It's predictable. Like Instagram.

Moving forward, in what direction do you think your work is headed?

Not sure where my work is headed. I'm going to do some basket ball hoops and backboards, some large watercolor trophies, more cars and trucks and some oil on acrylic paintings. Also some still-lifes and florals. Seriously. And possibly paint my kid's bedroom too... I think that's on the schedule.



Page 2: *Tin Star*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

This Page: *Strange Arithmetic*, 2013
Single Channel Projection Video (Stills), 9:30 min
Edition of 6 with 2 APs



“Given such guy-gear motifs, he's often pegged as a chronicler of the bruised psyches of modern men... his use of watercolor, an ephemeral medium often associated with hobbyists and women, undercuts the machismo and injects a contradictory note of fragile vulnerability.”

—Mary Abbe, *Star Tribune*, May 27, 2011

Right: *One More Down*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 40 inches

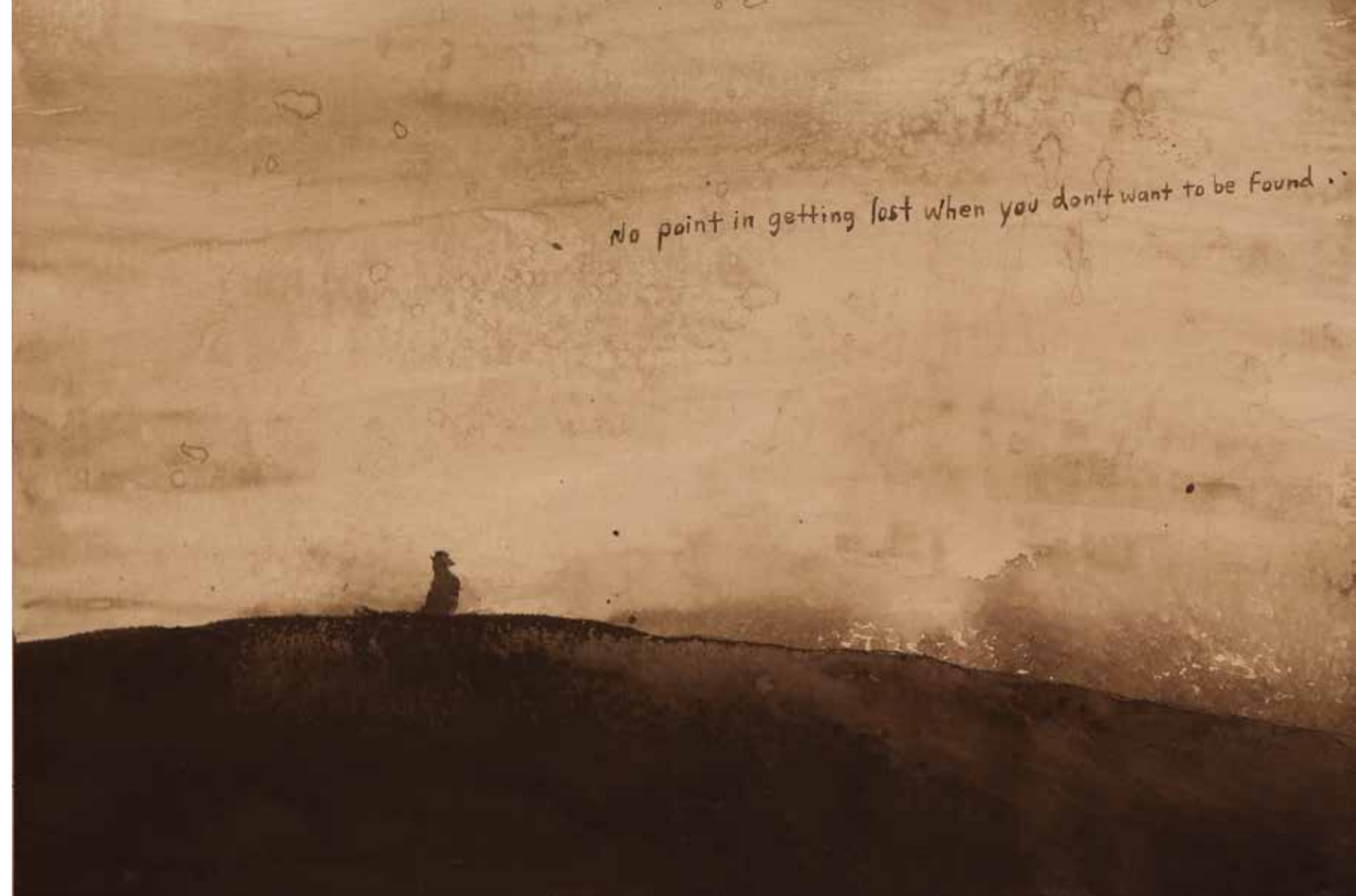
Opposite Page: *On the Other Side*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 40 inches





Left and above: *Puttin' Memories Away*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 57 x 41 inches
(full image and detail)

Opposite Page: *No Point in Getting Lost When You Don't Want to be Found*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches





Above: *Long Ago and Far Away*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

Right: *Jeffrey*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

Opposite Page: *Free? Hell Somebody's Got To Pay*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches



DAVID RATHMAN



“Rudimentary as they are, Rathman lets the background landscape shapes show through the figures in the fore and middle grounds. This endows humans with an almost ghost-like, afterimage quality, as if hinting at the fleetingness of these scenes and the lives they depict.”

—Michael Fallon, *Art Papers*, May/June 2007

Right: *We Bring 'Em In and Then the Law Begins*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

Opposite Page: *Wonderings*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 40 inches





Above: *Chord Changes*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 26 x 20 inches (detail)

Right: *Drillbit Taylor*, 2010
Watercolor on paper, 30 x 40 inches

Opposite Page: *The Day Attacked Me Without Warning*, 2010
Ink and watercolor on Yupo paper,
20 x 26 inches





“Although Rathman addresses macho, American themes, he does so with grace and elegance. His details are always delicate and the perspective presented is never from within the action, but from the viewpoint of a quiet observer.”

—Silas Van de Swaagh,
The Silo: Bennington College's Journal of Arts and Letters, 2012

Left: *Colburn* 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches (detail)

Opposite Page: *It All Comes Down to a Handful*, 2013
Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches



BIO

DAVID RATHMAN

Born 1958, Choteau, Montana
Lives and works in Minneapolis, MN

Education

1982 BFA, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 *Hope I'm Never That Wrong Again*, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA
David Rathman: A Retrospective, Rochester Art Center, Rochester, NY
- 2012 *Let's See What Stirs*, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, NY
- 2011 *The Other Side of Sunday*, Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
Great Expectations, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2009 *Against a Crooked Sky*, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, NY
- 2007 *You're Too Old To Understand*, Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Home and Away, Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
- 2006 *Somebody's Got To Go*, Clementine Gallery, New York, NY
- 2005 *Plumb Swole To A Strut*, Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2004 *I Threw Away the Rose*, Clementine Gallery, New York, NY
- 2001 *To Hell With Them Small Towns*, Clementine Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000 *Facts and Figures*, Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN
New Work: Paintings and Prints, Jennifer Armetta Fine Art, Chicago, IL
- 1996 *Paintings and Prints*, Montgomery Glasoe, Minneapolis, MN

Group Exhibitions

- 2012 *Contemporary Watercolors*, Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2010 *Box(e)*, Jerome Zodo Contemporary, Milan, Italy
- 2010 *Ultrasonic V: It's Only Natural*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Group Show, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, NY
- 2007 *The Players*, Arsenal Gallery, New York, NY
Paper Trail: A Decade of Acquisitions, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Vermillion Editions Limited: Prints, Multiples, Artist's Books, 1977-1982, Minneapolis Center of Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- 2006 *Wild Bunch*, Arts Center of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
The Searchers, Whitebox, New York, NY
- 2005 *Minets A Polis*, Cohan and Leslie, New York, NY
Summer CAMP, Clementine Gallery, New York, NY
- 2004 *Today's Man*, John Connelly Presents, New York, NY
The Company We Keep, Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2003 *Clementine @ Hallwalls*, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY
- 2002 *Dialogues: Amy Cutler/David Rathman*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Drawings 2002, New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, Summit, NJ
Where the Boys Are, Clementine Gallery, New York, NY
Opening Show: 13 Minnesota Artists, Minnetonka Center for the Arts, Wayzata, MN
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, Galerie Weiland, Berlin, Germany
New Visions of the West, Nassau County Museum of Art,

- 2001 Roslyn Harbor, NY
Works on Paper, Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, TX
Fast Food for Thought, Artscan Gallery & Rudolph Projects, Houston, TX
New Work: MCAD/McKnight Artists, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, MN
Minnesota Art with a Twist, Weisman Art Gallery, University of Minnesota, MN
Mixed Greens at Space 101, Brooklyn, NY
- 2000 *State of the Art: Recent Acquisitions*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
- 1999 *The Brown Whiskey Club*, Montgomery Glasoe Fine Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- 1994 *Six McKnight Artists*, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN
- 1993 *Contemporary Classics: The Illustrated Book Redefined*, Minnesota Center for the Book, Minneapolis, MN
- 1992 *Vermillion Editions 15th Anniversary Exhibition*, The Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN
- 1990 *New Artists' Books*, Granary Books Gallery, New York, NY
- 1989 *Five Jerome Artists*, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN

Awards

- 2000 McKnight Foundation Fellowship
Minnesota Book Award, Center for the Book
- 1993 McKnight Foundation Fellowship
- 1992 Bush Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship
- 1989 Jerome Foundation Fellowship
- 1986 Jerome Book Arts Fellowship

Public Collections

- Walker Art Center, MN
The Altoids Curiously Strong Collection, NYC
New Museum of Contemporary Art, NYC
The Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Boston Public Library, MA
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN
New York Public Library, NY
Stanford University, CA
Toledo Museum of Art, OH
Yale University Library, CT
Plains Art Museum, ND
Phoenix Public Library, AZ
University of Southern California, CA



Page 5: Strange Arithmetic Production Credit

Video production completed April 2012

Director: David Rathman

Producer: Tom DeBiaso

Cinematography: David Rathman

Creative Director & Editing: Nathaniel Freeman

Writing: Brad Zellar

Narration: Vern Norwood

Original Music: The Fort Benton Friars

Left:

At Home and Abroad, 2011

Watercolor on paper, 41 x 67 inches

Front cover:

I Always Come Back for More, 2013

Ink and Watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

Back cover:

Nothing Brings You Down Like Your Hometown, 2013

Ink and Watercolor on paper, 12 x 17 inches

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Nothing brings you down like your hometown.

