

Doug Stapleton

Artist's Statement

I re-configure found images into ambiguous narratives that often refer to the original source but mess around with the message. Visually I respond to the operatic shimmer, sparkle, and complexity—the grandly narrated spectacle—that is the history of western art. I want to continue that high key drama in my work.

I'm tethered to the possibility of the story within the fragment. I play with symbols and metaphors from art history, language, and religion to create new images that are strongly representational, with an attention to precise cutting and visual consistency, and a nod toward absurd meaning.

False Augury

These new images combine hands, eyes, plants, birds, fossils, and meteors; an ongoing vocabulary that I return to again and again. They become entities—augurs—nature's messengers of change and transformation, invoked as a union between the natural world and human experience. This intersection is a source of mystery and profound delight for me. Not because of any firsthand encounter. This inquiry is born from desire—a desire to be something other than human alone. They appear monstrous to me, and I welcome that appearance. Monsters are augurs, beautiful, strange and unsettling. They are a hint at something else that could be.

But as augurs of what is to come, they are unreliable prophets with only an occasional garbled message. That is not their shortcoming. It is mine. My own limited capacity. Nonetheless, I pursue them in their silent trajectory. False Augurs take flight through thought or wings. Mystery left in the wake of their departure. Did they ever intend to tell us anything?

Yet we read the skies in the flight of birds, hoping that feathers whisper truth.

Eyes open in everything; we have no monopoly on sight. Hands and flowers have better vision. Eyes watch, fingers feel, blooms reveal. In the union of flesh and flower lies the real mystery. In the rustle of wings, secrets of the coming year.

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June 2024

Doug Stapleton Biography

Doug Stapleton is an artist, curator and educator. Stapleton's work has been the subject of three solo exhibitions at the University of Illinois Springfield, Chicago Cultural Center, and Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago. A former Artistic Associate with the Chicago based contemporary dance company The Seldoms, he had worked on eleven evening length dance performances in the capacity of dramaturg and as a performer. Prior to his work with The Seldoms, he has performed in over forty solo and collaborative performances since 1989. He received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1989, and a BA in Anthropology from University of Delaware with a minor concentration in Art History and Ceramics.

Doug Stapleton Resume

Exhibitions

2024
False Augury, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, IL. Solo exhibition.

2023
Birds In Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI. Juried group exhibition.
Chimera: Art About Hybrid, Manifest Creative Research Gallery, Cincinnati, OH, April 2022. Juried group exhibition
Tarot, Memento Mori Gallery, Denver CO, March 2022. Group exhibition
Spiritual Visions, Fontbonne University Art Gallery, St. Louis, MO, January 2022. Juried group exhibition

2022
inQueery: 4 ALT/REALITIES. Frank Connect, Gene Skala, Kent Smith, Doug Stapleton. Center on Halsted, Chicago, IL.
October 2022. Group exhibition
REMIX, Aurora Public Art Gallery, Aurora, IL, June 2022. Group invitational exhibition

2021
Unseen: Collages, Paintings, Works on Paper, and Sculpture. Frank Connet, Gene Skala, Doug Stapleton, Michelle Stone, Rebecca Wolfram, 3D4D Gallery, Chicago, IL. February 2021
Charismatic Fauna, University of Illinois Springfield Art Gallery, Springfield, IL, January 2021. Solo exhibition

2020
Dropped from the Clouds, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL

2019
Misha Goro & Doug Stapleton. Chris Boicos Fine Arts at Salon Zürcher, Zürcher Gallery, New York, NY, March 2019.
Collage Exhibition. Teresa Hoffheimer Gallery, Chicago, IL, February 2019, Group exhibition
Curators Create 2nd Biennial Exhibition. Bridgeport Art Center, Chicago, IL, January 2019, Group exhibition.

2018
Atlas of the Heavens, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL

2017
Beyond the Edge, Mary Rezny Studio/Gallery, Lexington KY
Group exhibition Moving Point, Sidewinder Gallery, Chicago IL

2016
Collage Group Show, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL
Signature of All Things. Lubeznik Center for the Arts, Michigan City IN
Materiality and the Layered (Eye), Evanston Art Center, Evanston IL

2015
Return of the Exquisite Corpse, Printworks Gallery, Chicago IL
Vadim Gushchin, Douglas Stapleton, William Utermohlen, Jennifer Norback Fine Art, Chicago IL
30 Years: Illinois Artisan Program Exhibition, William Morris University Gallery, Chicago IL
Folktales & Legends, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan WI
Brink. Matthew Rachman Gallery, Chicago IL

2014
Like This. Jennifer Norback Fine Art, Chicago IL
Collage. Fotofever, Boicos Fine Art, Paris
Poseidon. Chris Boicos Fine Art, Paxos, Greece
21st Salon du Collage Contemporain. Les Hauts de Belleville, Paris France
A Passing Fancy, Center on Halsted Gallery, Chicago IL
Tales Tolds, Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati OH
Bodies, North Seattle Community College Art Gallery, Seattle WA. Juror: Elizabeth A. Brown, Ph.D., art historian

2013
33 x 3, MS Rezny Gallery, Lexington KY

Love, Merit School of Music, Chicago IL, Group exhibition in conjunction with the 3rd Annual Beethoven Music Festival.

Paris in Chicago, Beckel Odille Boicos Gallery, Paris, France

In Metamorphosis, Jennifer Norback Gallery, Chicago, IL

The Paper Show, Las Manos Gallery, Chicago, IL

Group exhibition. Galex 47, Galesburg Civic Art Center, Galesburg IL

2012

It's Time to Look Forward, Eyeporium Gallery, Chicago IL

Optimistic Reconstructions. Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago IL

The Grand Spectacle: Recent Collages. Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago IL

Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago IL, Rod Slemmons, Curator.

2011

Surface Tension: A Group Collage Exhibition. Robert T. Wright Gallery, College of Lake County, Grayslake IL.

Sustainable Books and Paper Art. Brushwood, Ryerson Woods, Deerfield IL

Cut, Evanston Arts Center, Evanston IL

Juxtaposed in its Essence, Elgin Community College Safety-Kleen Gallery, Elgin IL

2010

Group Exhibitions, Las Manos Gallery and Eyeporium Gallery, Chicago IL

Three Figurative Artists, Burlington Art Guild, Burlington IA

Piece Work, Ann Lloyd Gallery, Decatur Area Arts Council, Decatur IL

Michael and Angelo, Eyeporium Gallery, Chicago IL

Romp, The Depot Gallery, Beverly Shores IN

Made in Illinois. Robert Morris Gallery, Robert Morris University. Springfield IL

RE:(rebound, recycled, repurposed, reused), Abecedarian Gallery, Denver CO

2009

New Collages, Las Manos Gallery, Chicago IL

Navigation Imagination, Abecedarian Gallery, Denver CO

Small Work, Big Ideas, Morpho Gallery, Chicago IL

From What Are Dreams, Eyeporium Gallery, Chicago IL

3x3 Exhibition, Dance Center of Columbia College, Chicago IL

2008

Sideshow, Las Manos Gallery, Chicago IL.

Blank Space Exhibition, Northstar Health Clinic, Chicago IL

Bookish, Project Artaud Theater Gallery, San Francisco, CA

12x12, Refuge Center for Artists in Recovery, Skokie IL

2007

12x12, Refuge Center for Artists in Recovery, Skokie IL

2006

12x12, Refuge Center for Artists in Recovery, Skokie IL

Publications & Reviews

"CPC's global gathering of print media: Artists in their element", KT Hawbaker, Chicago Tribune, August 24, 2017.
(Review of Moving Point exhibition at Sidewinder Gallery)

Exhibition in Print: The Face in Collage. Kolaj Magazine, Issue #10, October 2014.

Doug Stapleton. Interview by Kieran Donnan. 22 Magazine, Volume 4, Collage, Fall-Winter 2013.

12 Days. Day 1. Collage. Doug Stapleton. Fat Boy Review (online journal), Richard House, Editor. December 2013.

Admiration. (image) published in the South Loop Review. Vol 15. 2013. Columbia College Chicago.

"In Metamorphosis and outside time: In works by Vivian van Blerk and Doug Stapleton at Jennifer Norback Fine Arts, archetypes reoccur and time is rearranged", Sarah Nardi, Chicago Reader, May, 2013.

"Art Review: Doug Stapleton, Optimistic Reconstructions", Diane Thodos, NeotericART: An Online Art Magazine, December 16, 2012.

Juxtaposed in Its Essence, catalog, Ed Krantz, curator. Elgin Community College, Elgin IL. 2011. "Critics Pick: Paul Clark and Doug Stapleton," Las Manos Gallery. NewCity. December 31, 2009.

Public Collections

Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago IL.

Lake County Community College, Grayslake IL