The Event of Art
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The Event of Art.
Image as Object as Situation
A 3D installation that starts with the desire to map a world that takes various images of the positivism of the rational technologic view and shows it handmade as some kind of imaginary. The image is of many works together. So imagine all of the pieces in the last image below in one room.

The short explanation:

I want to rearrange the figure/field relationship in the traditional 2 dimensional image and make it spatial. To give back to the image something of its actuality before it gets compressed, made flat and shrunken down.

In this new work I take 2D images and re-stage them—a kind of re-photographing, reimaging, re-imagining both the image itself and the contents of the image in new environments. Images constructed and viewed conventionally on screens, or a page, or a wall, are flat and presented at certain prescribed aspect ratios, and this itself conveys a certain meaning. The works here refigure the space of the photograph where images of maps, illustrations, big data, all kinds of images become spatial and that refigures them narratively and ontologically.

By cutting out persons and objects in the original photographs and re-staging them as shapes in spaces, the representations get lost, disappear, reappear into a labyrinth of histories vanquished like in a Marukami novel, folds that get lost, disappear, reappear between archers and shadows, archives of biologic specimens become fish, glaciers, toboggans, data graphics reshaped, repurposed, angled into new figures, together becoming an unmappable place, becoming more biology than set off as images in geometry. More an event than a thing. More poetry than prose.

By cutting out and shaping indeterminate figures from these once framed and stable images and arranging them spatially, the gallery becomes more of stage, almost a set, a pop up sculpture book, that immerses the viewer amongst fluctuating shapes, thoughts, materials.

So that’s the idea, to fabricate these pieces and bring them into the gallery. They can be printed on aluminum like the totems or dibond, cut into shapes and printed on. They are made to stand up from the floor, be wall mounted or hang from the ceiling.

The long explanation:

In search of a new project I’ve gone down various paths where things for a moment seem clear only to slip away into the ether. These include personal biography where i imagined my French Catholic mother’s family being the
torturing inquisitioners of my father’s Spanish Arabic Jewish Sufi family and on with the dispersal diaspora and continual reversal of roles by all family may have taken up, then a documentary on Future Cities, Surveillance Capital, Big Data, Climate Dynamics, the movements of people and data, in their models and perceptions, written as long form narrative, then a photography show on the uncanny accidents of search, and the seduction of the formal structures of info graphics and big data, then a four screen video installation on the body, the sensual, death, algorithmic society and machine language, and then a performance piece turning all this into a contemporary fable with the idea of being turned into a bird by a Sufi mystic that then narrates the above in a contemporary ambulatory performance piece. This idea occurred to me because in the personal biography I wanted to reach back in time when my family’s surname was Abulafia, the legendary Kabbalist who took from the Sufis the idea that God stands not outside us, but within us sharing Spinoza’s thought, all is god. In epic Sufi poetry the bird is a symbol of the travel of the soul which is of course everywhere, and in this everywhere sense disappears. This took me to spending much time listening to Alan Watts on Zen and was coincidently invited for a 2017 residency at Headlands in San Francisco where Alan Watts lived. The performance piece led me to the idea of doing a kind of contemporary Beckett/Joan Jonas/William Kentridge/Mike Kelly/Robert Wilson piece of staged works with objects, scrim, video and lighting. So I began writing a narrative for performance and building these little sets that you see below.

The more I went down the path of a performance piece, I realized that even more than a film production, it requires a stage, a theatre, a controlled environment, a certain amount of gear, booking a place for an evening or more for an audience. The more I looked at the objects I was making for the stage, the more the stage seemed to me like a gallery space and the objects somewhere between sculpture and photography, something with many folds, beautiful shapes and now was more in the world of objects and perhaps though all this I’ve have found a direction to make some new unique works.

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I began to see this when cutting out persons and objects in the original photographs restaging them as new events. I did this in my *Pictures* series using photoshop. But this seems to me very very different. There is something here much more dimensional and spatial in placing the images and arranging them in space. It’s not collage but more a mobile. It’s not about the images, the representations, but how they become shapes in space in an almost unmappable space, the labyrinth of a history vanquished like in a Marukami novel, folds that get lost, disappear, reappear between archers and shadows, archives of biologic...
specimens that become fish, data graphics reshaped, repurposed, angled, becoming more biology than set off as images in geometry. More an event than a thing. More poetry than prose.

And the objects here become ensembles of meaning they are individual and can work as stand alone pieces in other collections, other arrangements.

The picture frame, the archive, big data, the gallery, the white cube, all give a rational dimension to the work of art.

Here the portrait becomes data, the image becomes environment, shapes and spaces. There is front and back, up and down, yesterday and today, here and then gone, all in relation to an embodied viewer whose gaze is ambulatory.

There is something here withdrawn, which also interest me, the narrative of the performance, the documentary, all these are here and yet disappear here.

By cutting out and shaping indeterminate figures from these once framed and stable images and arranging them spatially, the gallery becomes more of stage, almost a set, a pop up sculpture book, that immerses the viewer amongst fluctuating shapes, thoughts, materials. (i)

So that’s the idea, to fabricate these pieces and bring them into the gallery.
Here is how I am thinking of doing it.
I build the models, the sets in miniature like you see below.