To have a gallery exhibition today requires shipping, fabrication, insurance, installation—all of it requiring meticulous planning and precise pre-visualization of the placement of where things will be arranged in the gallery space. Artworks are made, carefully packed and travel globally to arrive to the next white cube. All of it requires the review of committees, preview to investors and all with an eye to what might sell.

Much of the work I had done up to this point was video and prints works but wanted now to produce objects. Prints are no more than a file than can be produced and framed locally. I had the good fortune of my dealer, a good friend I had meet at an artist residency after the financial collapse of artandculture, an artist himself who became a gallerist and dealer. There is a lot of money in dealing, or there can be, and artist in global circulation requires a good deal of capital.

Now the artist has to take some territory, has to have a signature, has to become “famous” doing x and therefore do more of x.

I wanted at this point to extend my product line, yes, that’s right my “product line” as the artist is not unlike a fashion brand, required to make new work every season, and so my interest in the social circulation of the image and its instrumentality now was to be splices it into a larger query, the creation and circulation of beauty and war in a global circuit of trade, including luxury goods, Igbo statuary, arms, ammunition, search algorithms, genes, hashtags, fractals, fertility goddesses, eggs and identity.

Each room in the gallery would be a kind of platform to make visible in an elegant, often whimsical way, a network of relations and objects that commingle vastly different materials including wood and plaster, hand drawings and digital collages, eggs and rocket launchers, one ton shipping bags and online identities.

If we think of the earth, bodies and societies as writing material on which the original writing has been effaced we can nevertheless see and imagine the traces that remain.

With the Information Palimpsest the artist like the cook, me, would note how materials in their imbrication undergo a process of domestication, how the tactile becomes informational, yet the traces of past material histories now immaterial histories remain.

How then can we talk to what remains and what is present? This is the question each of the rooms wants to ask.

Complex systems whether biological or non-organic are increasingly becoming part of a flattened ontological continuum. Everything now talks to everything and with machines talking to machines and the human encounter with the non human all things become massively addressable and possibly massively conversational. In our age of the anthropocene we must learn these new modes of dialogue and commence conversation.

What the artist suggests is that we must do this materially. That our notion of the informational is yet another layering both map and archeology, both tool and object, a palimpsest that is us.
So, the works you see below, would need a “buy in” to be produced, require capital and have buyers on the other end. Much more capital and logistic energy and support than simply printing a Photoshop file.

You can imagine a lot of back and forth on this—who pays, who will buy, and so the artist now can’t simply make work but must have it so to speak “pre-approved” supported, and support eventually means, a way to pay for itself and some.

To visualize the exhibition, a model is made of the exhibition space, either a maquette or in Sketch Up, a 3D program with exact measurements of the physical space the work will be exhibited.

In some sense one can see the ease of the photography file or even the painting, which only needs to be rolled up and sketched and framed at its destination site. That was, after all the brilliance of painting, a mobile commodity not fixed to a specific place. A piece of fabric, easily transportable, stable and durable.

The installation work, a strange hybrid between media changed that.

But let’s cast back for a moment to the work of art, before it was a work of art, but a ritual, specific to a place, to a season, to its participants. An event that was bodily, aligned not just with sight but tactile and physical and sounding. This kind of work, called at times, a total work of art, had been an aspiration for artists and community to have a total experience. What was called a happening, something physical, spiritual, total. Well, in an atomized world, our senses are compartmentalized, our pleasures regimented and regulated and so art becomes an object to be posed.

Each room in the gallery is to be a platform to make visible in an elegant, often whimsical way, a network of relations and objects that commingle vastly different materials including wood and plaster, hand drawings and digital collages, eggs and rocket launchers, one ton shipping bags and online identities.

one ton transport-and-carry bags, an international standard, rocket launchers, trade in munitions, giant blue water storage containers and Tuk Tuk drivers.
In this new series of work, totems (#palimpsest), Marc Lafia playfully brings together objects of luxury, Igbo spirit statuary and virtual eye candy collections. With these he has created a series of witty and luscious sculptures, contemporary totems about global circuits of cultural exchange, international commerce, the sacred and spiritual of the totem and the object of art.

Expanding his work on the circulation of the image, Lafia uses images and objects circulated, shipped and collected on social networks and brings them into a spirit realm. To bring touch to vision he’s pastiched Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Gucci bags with images of Igbo statuary and Pinterest image collections creating aluminum sculptures of a new kind of totem, one that serves as an emblem and revered symbol of luxury as the power to possess and collect the world.

If we think of the earth, bodies and societies as writing material on which the original writing has been effaced we can nevertheless see and imagine the traces that remain. Here the artist, like the cook, notes how materials in their imbrication undergo a process of domestication, how the tactile becomes informational, yet the traces of past material histories now immaterial histories remain.

Here Lafia suggests we must do this materially. That our notion of the informational is yet another layering both map and archeology, both tool and object, a palimpsest making a new totem that is us.

(http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/palimpsest-totems)