

DEAD PEOPLE NEVER STOP TALKING

Q&A with Michelle Peñaloza and Eric John Olson

Images by Eric John Olson unless otherwise noted



Image: James Harnois. *We Are a Crowd of Others*, exhibition by Gail Grinnell, Sam Wildman, and Eric John Olson

From September to December 2016, artists Gail Grinnell, Samuel Wildman, and Eric John Olson used their residency at MadArt Studio to weave together an expansive site-specific installation with a series of public programs that investigated the language and resonance of ordinary acts.

As beautifully written in her essay, “Author Redux: Neither Dead Nor Discourse”, Abigail Susik describes the site-specific installation:

“Artist Gail Grinnell constructs a massive site specific installation out of yards and yards of dyed spun polyester, the kind used for clothing patterns, in mimicry of the actions and movements

embedded in her own mother's sewing practice. After crafting achingly intricate cuttings in muted shades from the spun polyester, in meandering shapes that wander from swirls to skeletal patterns and back, Grinnell drapes the melancholy, lace-like lengths from hooks placed high on the industrial walls of MadArt. Grinnell's son, the Portland-based artist Samuel Wildman, then gathers these fragile strips and incorporates them, on a continuing basis throughout the duration of the project and sometimes with his mother's help, into a monumental funnel-shaped structure, reminiscent of a wasp nest, which swallows most of the gallery space. Next to this astounding entity, Wildman's own sculptural assemblage, more intimately-scaled and made out of salvaged wood, liquid nails, and mason jars filled with concrete, ponderously accretes over time. Where Grinnell's form emphasizes the forward-driving pulse of artistic production, the urge to expand, Wildman's pinpoints on the other hand the halting precariousness of construction, the shyness of craft."



Image: James Harnois, Installation by Gail Grinnell and Sam Wildman