

# **The Complex and Fugitive Kind:**

Drawing Upon A Paradisal World

by

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**I.**

For my wonderful wife, Lorah

&

For Mom and Dad.

## II.

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#### IV. Introduction

"For the next hour he stumbled through the forest, his sense of direction lost, driven from left to right by the occluding walls. He had entered an endless subterranean cavern, where jeweled rocks loomed out of the spectral gloom like marine plants, the sprays of grass forming white fountains."

- J.G. Ballard, *The Crystal World*

"There is only one way left to escape the alienation of present day society-to retreat ahead of it."

- Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*

*The Complex and Fugitive Kind* is an exhibition of drawings comprised in two parts. The principal piece is a large-scale panoramic drawing entitled, *The Complex*. [Fig. 1,2] This piece measures twenty feet in width and six feet in height. The second component is a series of seven small drawings installed on the opposing two walls of the gallery space. The smaller drawings are titled *Fugitive Kind*. [Fig. 3, 4] *The Complex* is a palatial, sprawling, yet isolated utopian city depicting a montage of architectural forms, exotic wilderness and the quiet stillness of an imagined civilization. The drawings emerge as a fever dream of cult film references, a myriad of pan-cultural, literary, historical and art historical references. With this work, I aim to present sympathy for the fundamentally human urges for the paradisaical, for independence, shelter, innovation, and an existence within a free zone, yet at the same time, providing a critical model for the potentially sinister and disruptive urges for ownership, domain, occupation and totalizing control. The artwork is not utopian, and does not propose to offer any form of utopian solution; yet, the work does take utopia as its subject. More specifically, I am speaking of the aesthetics of utopia: the spaces and forms, as well as the systems of propagation for these

aesthetics in contemporary life, ranging from film maquettes to corporate spaces. The work aims to contradict itself by taking on both the utopian imagination and critical utopias, as experienced through architecture and the landscape in art and culture. It is through the mediation of contemporary art and culture that we experience the collective consciousness of our utopian longing. The work reflects on the struggles to create a fair, pleasurable and self-sustaining society in the collective imagination, and political will, as well as the false appearances of these types of utopias through the economy of visual aesthetics. My drawings are a heterogeneous montage, which suggest that there is no singular vision for utopia (i.e. communism, hippie communes, corporate utopias, etc.) that dominates. My aim is to intertwine the social and the aesthetic, offering both an escape from and a critique of our current conditions.

## V. The Utopian Imaginary

I will begin by elucidating the various iterations or understandings of a prevalent trope, utopia. Utopias are spaces of otherness. There is a duality in the contemporary use of the term. The origins are derived from two Greek words, οὐ, "not," and τόπος, "place." (Knowles) The English homophone, *Eutopia* comes from the Greek words εὖ, "good" or "well," and τόπος, "place." (New Dictionary of the History of Ideas) From these origins, the term functions to describe a perfected reality that cannot be. The "cannot be" element is ironically dystopic. A dystopia is characterized as a failed utopia, and is a conversely negative place. Michel Foucault initially elaborated the concept for the heterotopia in a lecture entitled, *Other Space* in 1967. This term functions to describe everyday, banal spaces that have the same double vision that a utopia contains. These spaces are real and unreal, perfect and imperfect, possible and impossible. Foucault explains that these spaces are also decidedly non-hegemonic. Examples of these heterotopias can be discovered in mirrors, or boats. "The boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea..." (Foucault) In the foundational text *Utopia*, by Sir Thomas More, William Morris' *News from Nowhere*, as well as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, we find several examples of pre-twentieth century texts that establish a framework for not only the utopian imaginary, but also utopian political implementation. These texts are utopian in a sense that they express future-rooted aspirations to improve society. Yet the approach is by providing a critical model to illustrate how far we are from what we have the potential to be. According to contemporary philosopher Slavoj Žižek, the idea of the utopia as an

imagined, ideal society in which we simultaneously acknowledge its impossibility, or the capitalist utopia in which new and perverse desires are not only allowed, but solicited into realization are both false. (Zizek) For Zizek, “The true utopia is a matter of innermost urgency. You are forced to imagine this reality as the only way out.” (Zizek) For Zizek, the true utopia is a political reality and it is a practical utopia when the situation is so pressurized, and without an option for resolution that out of the necessity of survival you must invent a new space. (Zizek) Regarding these complexities, expanded definitions, and uses for the term utopia, it is within the inherent contradictions and double vision that I find meaning. In addition, it is the idea of ‘the other’ that all of these shifting definitions, from utopia to heterotopia, share. I find Zizek’s concept of a fractured, pressurized chamber to be useful, and related to Roland Barthes conception of utopia for *The Pleasure of the Text*. For my purposes, I am combining Zizek’s description of the ‘true utopia’ with the supposed ‘false’ utopian tropes.

My work is not irresolute or ambivalent. Rather there is a double vision in the work; it exists on the fault line that divides utopias from dystopias, and hegemonic spaces from non-hegemonic spaces. I can identify, in the work, moments of utopian longing, dystopic hallucinations and the banality of heterotopia. Similar to Foucault’s description of a boat as a place without a place, is the image of *The Complex* as a ‘retreat center’. The center is thoroughly entrenched in the imageries of solemn, peaceful, escape, and meanwhile manage to remind us of corporate facilities. It describes the activity of escape, and is paradoxically a destination. It is an ending point, a fixed location; static.

## VI. Landscape and the Dust of Paradisal Terrain

Although, not explicitly sited or illustrated in either *The Complex* or *Fugitive Kind* drawings, a generative literary source was found for the work in J.G. Ballard's, *The Crystal World*. This work may serve as a hinge-pin for my own conceptual delirium as evidenced in the drawings. In this novel, Ballard fully illustrates a phenomenological process of crystallization taking place in a far off West African jungle. This process is at once a metamorphosis like the transformation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, in which Gregor Samsa changes into a monstrous bug, and something like a "Midas-Touch," whereby everything the mythical god Midas touches transforms into gold. The entirety of the space is becoming covered in diamonds, gems and glittering jewels. Most of the jungle inhabitants flee in terror, but some remain, dazzled and entranced by the diseased beauty. Those that remain in the embalmed diamond jungle are on a quest for Paradise.

For some reason he felt less concerned to find a so-called scientific explanation for the phenomenon he had just seen. The beauty of the spectacle had turned the keys of memory, and a thousand images of childhood, forgotten for nearly forty years, filled his mind, recalling the paradisal world when everything seemed illuminated by that prismatic light... (Ballard 69)

The idea of something being both terrifying as well as incredibly seductive is something I want to bring into the world of my drawings. Ballard has created an endlessly unfolding illustration of the sublime for *The Crystal World*. The similarly unfolding world in *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* shares the double vision of Dr. Sanders in *The Crystal World*, and presents a world that is both beautiful and frightening. In this passage from Ballard's book, Dr. Sanders also addresses his own childhood memories and a process of lost index. Memory and arrested development are topics that I will

discuss later, as they relate to the process of drawing and the consumption of imagery. The phenomenological process that is enacted upon the West African jungles of *The Crystal World* is like a mass rigor mortis. The landscape and plant life are seized and traumatized to the point of complete irreversible catalyzation. This process is not only spatial and physiological, but it is cerebral. This magical but thoroughly disruptive crystallization process is not unlike the emergence of architectural forms in *The Complex*. The architectonic forms in *The Complex*, materialize in a hemorrhagic fever. In this way, architecture is like the bejeweled eyes of Ballard's snake.

In *The Complex*, nature and the landscape appear to be at odds with architecture; the sea is encroaching, the mountain is far too close to the middle ground and is, at times, superimposed over the forms of the buildings in front of it, and the plant-life appear to be reclaiming space in the gaps between the concrete. Paradoxically, the sprawl of this civilization is taking over the landscape. It is unclear whether nature has been squeezed out to make room for the fragments of Modern civilization, or if the natural process of entropy is taking place, and we can soon expect to find these very buildings covered in moss and ivy. There is no sign of current human presence, although there is a magnitude of human monuments and artifacts.

*The Complex* is a panoramic image displaying the interface between the landscape and architecture. The traditions of panoramic landscape were most prevalent in nineteenth century Europe. The artists of these works sought maximum illusion and the exhibitions for these works were spectacular events. The translation of panorama from the original Greek literally means to 'see all.' (Comment 7) My drawings simultaneously



implore a suspension of disbelief through the various systems of persuasiveness, and at times a sustained disbelief. Although, more similar to nineteenth century panoramas formally, the work is more so related conceptually to the mythical and sometimes romantic panoramas of Henry Darger. [Fig. 5] Darger's drawings are occupied with an exotic and enigmatic array of flora and fauna; all of which are carefully traced and then reused elsewhere in the picture or in another image. The species of plant and wild life is a conflation of contexts, sources, and geographic locations. Darger has created an elaborate, new mythology from the borrowed imagery. The plant life is an iconic signifier of a wild place, or a far-off dreamscape. The plant life in my works for *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* is similarly graphic, and collaged into the scene.

Vija Celmins [Fig. 6] has stated that her images "dispel romantic notions of the sublime in nature." ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)) For me, I am not entirely persuaded by this proclamation that the sublime has been disposed of in Celmins's work. There is a sense of wonder, awe, power and the majestic in Celmins's work. However, this may be for purely secular purposes, and not driven by the awe of Creation. I share a similar inclination with Celmins; that of an urge to allow the romantic aspects of the work to coexist with forces that seek to undermine them. Four hundred years before the *Hudson River School* in America, the Flemish painters of Northern Europe were deeply invested in the prospect; a fertile, uncontaminated wildness, which was viewable from higher ground. The point of view is that of an onlooker to a vast open space, which contains an unmatched promise. Early American westward expansion artists of the nineteenth century, to whom my work is indebted to, such as Frederic Church [Fig. 7] and Thomas Moran [Fig. 8] pioneered the quest for "sublime" sights, seeking to convey on paper and

canvas a divine presence in the marvels of nature.” (Davidson 3) These vantage points were thoroughly idyllic and not entirely the results of an unfettered encounter with the land. Many of these idyllic images were painted in private resorts. These were established with the purposes of providing artists a locale to produce their paintings of an immaculate, pristine, and unaltered nature. Foundational to the spaces that I create is the idea of nature as a destination for tourism, as something that is entirely designed as a facility, and is thoroughly manufactured.

Although this interface may present a coalescent landscape, I am less interested in an ecological hypothesis, or illustrating a particular environmental concern. I am however, interested in the landscape as a monad; a singular bit, collaged from multiple zones, exotic, idyllic, ‘otherness’ in nature that is self contained or constructed within the garden structure. Its geometric boundaries and mapped logic are locked into an abrupt nexus, similar to architecture.

But to some extent this happens, and we replace the world with our ideas of it, gardens being intermediate enough to make us think they *are* nature and not simply embellishments or enhancements of it, regions which unlike paintings let us forget there is anything beyond. (Harbison 3)

In *The Complex*, the plant life is completely graphic. It is as rigid and unwavering as the steel and concrete. Harbison describes botanical gardens as,

The most faithful imitations of Eden, presenting a conspectus of all the species, all climates and places harmonized with each other, all history overlapping, the rain forest on the point of swallowing up papyrus... (Harbison 3)

This is in meaningful contrast to the functions of botanical illustration. The images are a splendid confusion of orthographic display; chopping up the natural appearance for the pursuit of mechanic inquiry. This inclination to imitate, to replicate or recapture is important to representational art, but it is also a intrinsic human impulse. These

botanical illustrations function similarly to my own drawings. I am replacing the actual world with my ideas of it.

## VII. Modern Shangri-La

The city, actual or imagined, is a cultural metaphor for the oppositional behaviors of human collectivity and isolationism. They are paradoxically filled or congested spaces, but also entirely impersonal. The landscape is devoid of human presence. The forces of collectivity that one would expect to prohibit alienation inevitably squeeze us out of the space. *The Complex* was chosen as the title for the multiple definitions of “complex” and the relationship of those definitions to utopia. (“Complex” - consisting of many varied yet connected parts, denoting or containing numbers or quantities that are at once, real and imaginary). (Abate, Jewell) In addition, the title alludes to the ubiquitous corporate plazas [Fig. 9] of urban and suburban landscapes; the self-aggrandizing monuments, and the power that presides over a thoroughly networked world. This is an instance where the division between commune and the corporate plaza is blurred. The appearance is that of interconnectivity and shared architectural identity; the space is claustrophobic and overwrought with built articulations. *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* depict, panoramically and episodically, a modern *Shangri-La*; a mystical, isolated, earthly paradise. (Hilton) This infrastructure is a desert mirage [Fig. 10] viewed through a pane of glass, an apparition, and a fantasy that has been greatly distorted through analog means. *The Complex* is simultaneously a corporate complex and a *Shangri-La*. The interconnectivity is part sinister construct and part monastery.

In my drawing, the space is replete with large plinths of polished white granite, decorative fountains, impossible steps, overwhelmingly sublime structures, shrubs and plant life that serve to reinstate the contours of the architectural forms. [Fig. 11] I am

critical of the more currently prevalent usages in corporate marketing of the rhetoric of utopian revolution for capitalistic gain, such as the pastiching of utopian forms and aesthetics in such disparate examples from *Fox News* to *Apple Inc.* Although as an artist working with “utopia” as my subject matter, I am aware that I am doing something very similar. I am utilizing these same aesthetics and forms in my drawings. It is not an egalitarian space, but the studio is a kind of utopia, or if nothing else, the practice of making art emerges out of this utopian drive. The deviation here is that the studio is frequently an insular and autonomous space.

Peter Doig, [Fig. 12] in two separate interviews with Judith Nesbit in 1998 and again in 2007 has conflicting memories, emotions and attitudes regarding modern structures. He describes the terror; the dense, pitch-black of nature with a peering glow of welcoming light emerging from a house in 1998. (Doig, Nesbit 37) In 2007, he describes an image of the Corbusier building as skull-like, with its vacant holes. (Doig, Nesbit 37) Doig’s statements are not irresolute, but rather by virtue of the dual condition of his opinions, he has contradicted himself. I share in Doig’s sentiments and attitudes about these structures. *The Complex* hosts an amalgam of modern architectural references. The images are culled from a variety of sources including the preparatory drawings for the many unrealized projects of Frank Lloyd Wright. Including, *Mrs. D. J. Donahoe, project of three connected houses, 1959*, [Fig. 13] *Greek Orthodox Church, Wauwatosa, WI, 1956*, [Fig. 14] *Point Park Project, Pittsburgh, PA, 1947*, *Rose Pauson house, Phoenix, AZ, 1940*. Modern architecture of the twentieth century holds within it the history of utopian potential and simultaneously a sense of loss for its shortcomings and failures. These drawings present nostalgia for a future that failed to arrive. Modern architecture as envisioned by

architects of this time such as Phillip Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe to be broadly accessible and egalitarian, ultimately became available to a privileged elite. (Hough, Ramírez-Montagut 1) At the time however, these structures were thought to be a vehicle for real-world social change. It was believed that lives could be improved through architecture, and that rather than being at odds with nature, that architecture could partner with it. A slightly modified detail of Phillip Johnson's *Water Gardens Park*, Ft. Worth Texas, 1974 is prominently positioned in the center of *The Complex*. It is a pentagonal cesspool, a water treatment facility, and a corporate fountain all at once. The image, despite being an actual Johnson design is appropriated from the imaginative use of the park for the film *Logan's Run*. [Fig. 15] I am interested in the inclusion of modern architecture in popular films, and more specifically in science fiction films. Often these buildings are sinister places or they are the domains of the super-villain. (Hough, Ramírez-Montagut 43) These forms are far too sculptural, aggressive and cold to be the benign dwellings for the beloved superhero. The celebratory and sensational expositions of the historic *World's Fair*, *World's Expo* and the *Olympic Games* are also an influence for the work. Often the marketing, framing and construction of new architectural projects in the host city present the spectator with an entirely new place, and one that is often fictional. The intentions are to promote the city to the "world's stage." In this moment it is crucial to convey for the sake of publicity, the stature, power, relevance and wealth of the city.

In a similar confusion of fantasy and reality, we have an example in *Disneyland*.

*Disneyland* represents the utopian superego of American culture. It is a real place; it is a construct, a fantasyland, and an economic machine all at once. In the early 1960s,

*Disneyland's Tomorrowland* [Fig. 16] served as a continuous *World's Fair*; displaying the latest in NASA's space-age technology, architecture, and the hope of a more luxurious and fluid future. In this way, *Disneyland* was not simply limited to capturing the imagination of children, but it was compelled to capture the hopes of an era. Yet another example of fantasy and reality merging is the shift in the early 1990s from the strictly public space of amusement parks to that of private residential space in the advent of *Celebration, Florida* in *Walt Disney World*. Jean Baudrillard describes a hypothetical inability to discern reality from fantasy as a *hyperreality* in *Simulacres et Simulation*. This is a kind of separate reality by proxy, or a world of simulacrum. *Disneyland* is a *hyperreality*, as is Las Vegas, the video game *Sim City* [Fig. 17] and other virtual zones, but these simulations, according to Baudrillard, are of things which never truly existed. Baudrillard states that 'simulation is master, and nostalgia, the phantasmal, parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials, alone remains.' (Baudrillard) These nostalgias and simulations, such as we find in *Disneyland*, and other spaces are substitutes which are an ever-present "new" reality. I have utilized these sources for my drawings *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* as a presentation of the mediated culture that we face.

## VIII. Drawing and Contemporary Life

Due to the sheer density of detail in *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind*, and near horror vacui, each of the drawings are extremely obsessive in their quotidian detail. There is a tautologous aspect to drawing that describes it's own making in it's becoming. Drawing is nothing more than this in process; an eternal incompleteness, provisionality, proposition, and imperfection. The process, while being immediate, is paradoxically slow and tedious. At times they take on varying technical approaches. Each drawing employs careful, tight modeling with graphite or charcoal pencil. These marks coexist with washes of graphite, smudges, and erasure. Time is a construct. *The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* are about the passing of time; i.e., the twentieth century, the conflation of time, and simultaneously existing inside and outside of time. There is a time-based element in the application of marks in each drawing. Coexisting are the slow marks of pencil with the increased velocity of graphite powder. There are blurs, transitions or transformations, and apparitions, whereby one form bleeds and migrates into another. At times the integrity of the image is lost; it evaporates, or there is a fissure, or a stuttering of the image. These ruptures are in opposition to the integrity of the sharply rendered, tight and technical implementations of the pencil. Sometimes forms and images appear to be in motion, or in a state of dissolve. Other times they are static and resolute. In architecture, drawing has long been used to develop concepts of space and present visions of future buildings. This provisional history, as well as the materiality of drawing that lends itself to provisionality posits drawing as something that is prophetic. Drawing material is dust, and dust it shall remain. There is no emulsifying effect to the properties of graphite and charcoal. It remains the material that it always was.



Provisionality and incompleteness is an idea further expressed in usage of the incomplete painting of Édouard Manet's, *Escape of Rochefort* (1880-81) [Fig. 18] as a point of departure for the fourth drawing in *Fugitive Kind*. The incomplete frames of Fritz Lange's science fiction film *Metropolis* [Fig. 19] were a conceptual catalyst for *The Complex*. The concept behind the set of drawings, *Fugitive Kind* came from the idea of escape. Each of the drawings presents a moment of leaving or departure, and possibly this movement could be from the larger world depicted in *The Complex*. These drawings are of discreet moments that the viewer is not privileged to see in the larger panoramic drawing.

The experience for the viewer is one of claustrophobic intake; the magnitude of scale stays hidden from view until the moment of full immersion. The density of drawn information and the scale of the image is a jarring experiential moment. The textures, colors, and rich tonal shifts of deep black to silvery, jeweled gray, to a chalky white are seductive uses of baroque lighting effects. There is a subtle compression of space, suggesting traditional Chinese landscape painting [Fig. 20] or modern surrealism. The subtly skewed perspective, and scale shifts make traversing the space an arduous experience.

For me, drawing is immersed in the memories and longings of childhood. It is a practice that everyone participates in or has a degree of familiarity with. It is a pragmatic procedure. The notion of drawing an elaborate parallel world is steeped in the memories of my own boyish past-times, as is the preoccupation with technology, science

fiction, fantasy and magic. The unapologetic embrace of these only serves to increase the arrested development present in the drawings.

More than a continuous take, the drawings are that of a montage, or a “mash-up”. These moments are all separated by time, location, and source material. Many of the buildings that are included in the drawing *The Complex* come from film stills of architectural maquette’s that have been used in various popular movies. These references tend to be subtle enough that they remain undetectable to most. More overt references to the film are found in the *Paramount Studio’s* logo [Fig. 21, 22] that towers over the cityscape, and an image derived from the film *Man On Wire*, which depicts Philippe Petit tightrope walking between the *World Trade Center* towers. Other, less obvious references include, the shape of a wide angle projection, suggested narratives, the blur, the appropriated scratches and disruptions of old black and white film, as well as the small episodic drawings that are evocative of a chopped-up and unspooled film reel.

An incompatible combination of utopian commune and corporate infrastructure exists in contemporary architectural expositions. The history of these expositions is far reaching, yet we have examples in the most recent *Olympic Games* in Vancouver and Beijing. In addition, we have examples in the upcoming *Worlds Expo* in Shanghai and the development of real estate in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. [Fig. 23] The prominent feature of “superstar” architectural projects from Zaha Hadid, Santiago Calatrava, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, or Adrian Smith often marks these expositions for example. These spectacles of tourism are promoted and executed with

the philosophy of progressing the economic vigor of a city. The language of progress, innovation and egalitarian will is often projected with the willingness to sacrifice history and despoil the environment in a valiant sprint to modernization. These are modern

*Towers of Babel.* [Fig. 24]

## IX. Religious Utopias

Religious utopias have been the most common form for utopian implementation. The term “utopia” refers to a place created by human effort. The human efforts exerted to form religious utopias are ones that seek to establish on earth, a society that reflects that which has yet to come in the “afterlife.” The “Abrahamic” ideas of the Garden of Eden and of Heaven may be interpreted as a utopia, especially in the more mystical forms, or outside of established orthodoxy. The belief within the Judeo-Christian orthodoxy of a “Kingdom” is incongruent with the principles of earthly utopias. A Kingdom is an egalitarian space. Nonetheless, the Garden of Eden and Heaven are both examples of transcendental realms. These religious utopias propose a place that is free from sin, poverty, and death. The proposed experimental structure for *New Harmony* [Fig.25] in what was to accompany *The Harmony Society* in Harmony, Indiana in the early nineteenth century was an influence for the connectivity of *The Complex*. Although, *New Harmony* failed in its attempts, *The Harmony Society* was one of the longest-running communes in American history. (Podmore) The society was formally organized and all of the members of this society placed their goods in a common. (Podmore) The failure of this society led, historically, to the formation of the *American Individualist Anarchist* movement. (Podmore) *The Harmony Society*, in many ways, reminds me of the hippie commune movement of the 1960s, and contemporary anarchist squatting communities throughout Europe and Latin America. Although, primarily secular, there are ideological principles, political or otherwise that intersect or relate to these utopian impulses. I sympathize with the pursuit to create religious utopias. For me, the motivations that can be found in these historical efforts, and the contemporary

endeavors to create intentional communities are irreproachable. Yet, it is difficult to ignore the dystopic activity of withdrawing from society and the larger culture. The motivation to be hidden from the public, only accessible to a narrow circle of "enlightened" people is objectionable.

## X. Conclusion

“Despite its diversity, utopian art carries on an important part of the legacy of the modernist commitment to social and political transformation. It offers provisional visions or models of transformation without the dystopic consequences attendant upon the actual attempt to bring them about. In this sense, the utopian impulse finds a largely negative or critical articulation in contemporary visual art, even in its therapeutic forms. It holds up a critical mirror to the world; a glass through which the darkness of the future illuminates the present.”

-Richard Noble, *Utopias: Documents of Contemporary Art*

The failure of modernism, or the inevitable dystopic consequences that accompany a utopian vision of the world are not only bleak, and suffer from the potential to be hackneyed, but they beg the question, who is served by these supposedly inevitable consequences? In Sabine Folie’s curatorial statement for *Modernism as Ruin: An Archaeology of the Present* at the *Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein*, she states that, “born out of the spirit of dystopia, is a practically utopian thought of “sustainability.” (Folie) Take for instance, the work of Robert Smithson, Gordon Matta Clark, or Agnes Denes; although at times preserving crystalline moments; the work emerges out of entropy and rust to give rise to renewal and reconstitution. [Fig. 26] It is from this agency of decline that the potential for regeneration is possible. I have the same desired result for my drawings, which is to utilize the felicitous medium of drawing to propose a fictional world, culling from the scrap heap of failed utopian visions. I see myself as a conceptual squatter of architectural renderings. In this procedure of borrowing sources, an activity of repurposing, and re-contextualizing takes place. It is here, within these conceptual ambitions that the work becomes optimistic and suffused with possibility.

*The Complex and Fugitive Kind* is a multiplex of architectural, cinematic, and virtual fragments. It is equal parts utopian, dystopian, and heterotopian. It takes as its primary

source material, the unrealized modern architectural projects from the twentieth century, film maquettes, and landscape tropes. The activity of pastiching modern architectural forms into my drawings does not fully engage in cataloging the entire spectrum of twentieth century architecture. The selection is not nearly comprehensive enough. Instead we have a memory of the twentieth century; a snap shot, and one that is filled with analog slippages. The film and popular cultural references serve as a visual hyperbole and as an intervention between my intake of the images and the pure forms of these architectural subjects.

Despite the impossibility of a wholly perfected utopian place on earth, we must aspire for it. This pursuit of that which cannot be fully obtained or experienced, and can only be understood in part is, for me, a fundamental conviction. As is, the belief in things both seen and unseen. For me, it is only in the perfected reality of Heaven that these utopian longings can be sufficiently registered. My drawings do not represent, like the description William Blake offered for his work, "Visions of Eternity," (Butler, Blunt 7) and they also do not represent apocryphal hell-scapes, as Hieronymous Bosch [Fig. 27] aimed for in many of his paintings. Rather, they are the images of life and culture on earth; defined by spectacles of vastly differing implications, and moments of double vision. Drawing offers a freedom to express these propositional worlds for all of their failures and victories, whether they are ominous or irreproachable, and without the attendance of dystopic consequence.

*The Complex* and *Fugitive Kind* drawings represent the longings for absolute escape and the efforts to create a Paradise on earth.



## XI. Appendices



figure 1

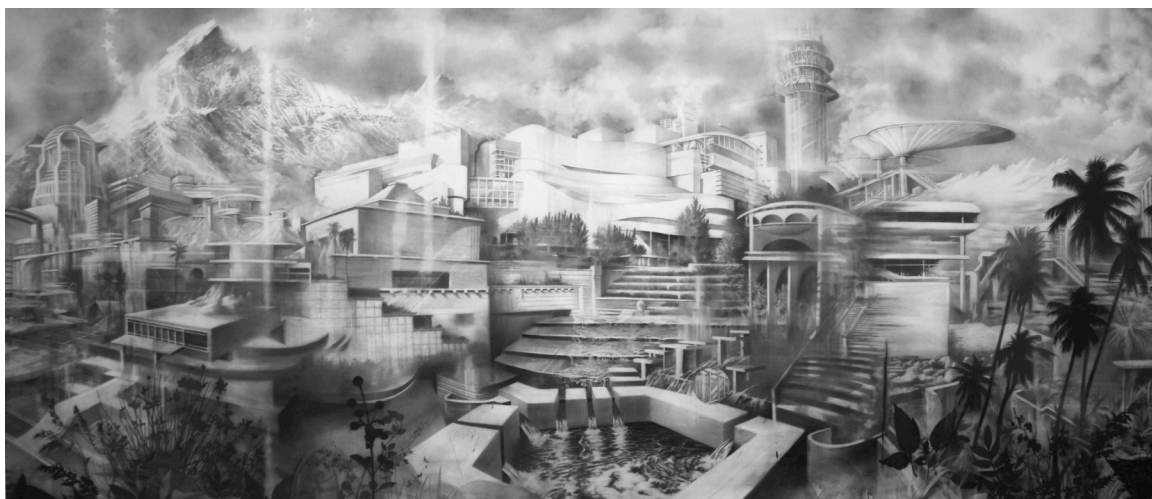


figure 2



figure 3



figure 4



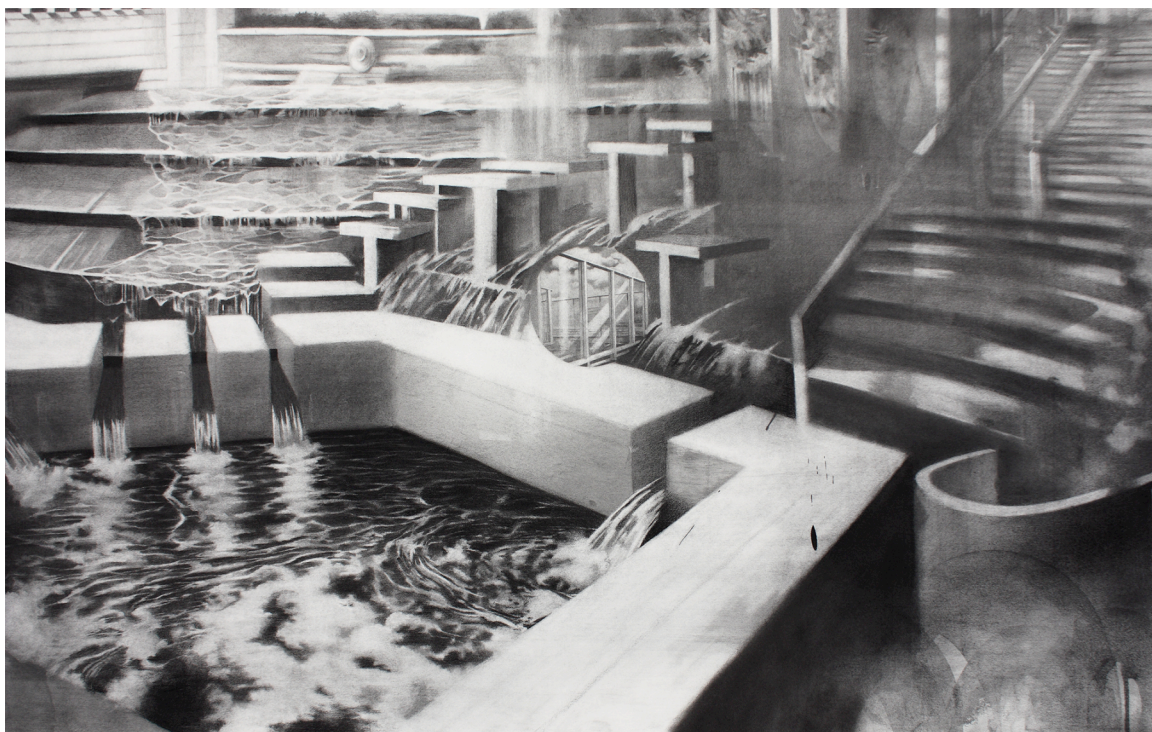


figure 11



figure 22

figures 12 - 21, 5 - 10, 23 - 27: see attached appendices

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