



Jonas Kulikauskas

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Portfolio for practice-led DPhil application

Ruskin School of Art
University of Oxford

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Cairns

2020–ongoing

I first encountered cairns as a youngster in the Lithuanian boys scouts. We didn't call them cairns, but rather, "trail markers," identified as 3 stacked rocks or more. I am grateful to anonymous travelers who construct and leave them, reassuring the next person that they are not lost. The creator of the cairn doesn't need it—they know where they are. The selfless gesture requires minimal energy but the payoff for their "neighbor" in the wilderness is considerable.



Cairn No. 1
oil on canvas, 36"x48", 2020



Cairn No. 2
oil on canvas, 36"x48", 2021



Cairn No. 3
oil on canvas, 36"x48", 2021



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Penny Trays

2019–ongoing

The penny is small and seemingly useless. One can no longer buy a gumball with it. A newspaper no longer costs a penny. Canada gave up altogether and stopped minting them in 2013. Somehow, in the United States, Abraham Lincoln continues to circulate.

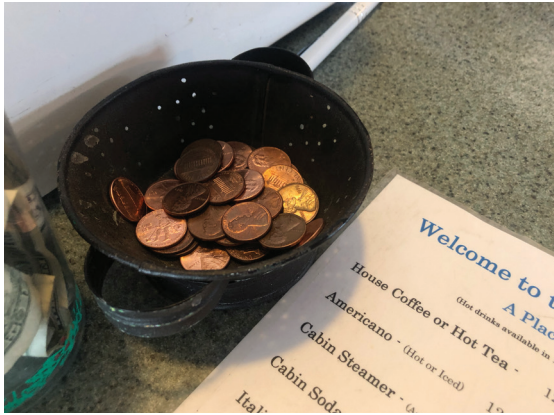
So often one runs across trays with pennies that are free for the taking. Sometimes they are mass-made vacuum-formed boxes with “Take a Penny, Leave a Penny” stamped on the side. Even more often are handmade trays, homespun sentiments from the storeowner.

I love the notion that this is an unwritten law...a small gesture towards the common good. When I need a penny, I take one with a split second of gratitude. I don't question what type of person left the penny or how I'm supposed to use it. In kind, I don't leave a penny to be used for only “certain” kind of people. The tray is the great equalizer. Everybody wins. Kindness prevails.

By elevating this simple ritual, I'm hoping others will be inspired to take the spirit of this gesture and convert it into greater deeds in their communities and the world at large.



Penny Tray No. 1, 11" x 14", archival print, Jonas Kulikauskas, 2019





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Not of This World

2018-20

Not of This World is a group of artworks inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Jesus spoke to his apostles, “You are of this world. I am not of this world.” and offered truth-seeking teachings that have endured nearly two thousand years. His layered themes of judgment, love, reconciliation, abundance, eternity, faith, permanence, innocence, accountability, are relevant today. I explore his teachings, reconnect to their meaning, and seek his messages in today’s world to see what kind of fresh perspectives and new experiences can be delivered. In a world with 2.2 billion Christian followers, I also strive to understand the absence of Christianity in the art world today? It appears that the spiritual message of Jesus Christ, once the very heartbeat of the art world, has evaporated.



Suppressed, oil on canvas, 32”x48”, with fireplace, 2019
(installation view, Hauser and Wirth Los Angeles)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 60"x48" with stones, 2019 (installation view, Hauser and Wirth Los Angeles)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 72"x90", with bench, 2019 (installation view, Hauser and Wirth Los Angeles)



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Still Life

2020

I asked one of the sisters,
“What mostly do you do here?”
She replied,
“Mostly...we eat and we pray.”

My camera is typically loaded with black and white film but the overcast skies and the dark monastery rooms made for poor light conditions. The purpose of this 1,100-mile road trip is to clear my head and push myself out of my comfort zone, so I resort to shooting digital and in color. Because the premises are private, photographing the sisters isn't possible without obtaining 26 release forms. My movement is limited as many of the rooms and sections of the building are off limits. The snow picks up and walking outside requires winter gear I'm not prepared for. Needless to say, my options are limited.

Time to pause. Silence is observed from 9pm to 9am. Embrace this monastic living, this still life. Join the sisters for daily prayer. Share meals three times a day. We eat and we pray is now my mantra. Stop wandering. Stop seeking. Stop projecting. The answers aren't out there. Break bread in this dining room. At this table. This place. Right here. Now.

Monastery of St. Gertrude
Artist in residence
January 2020
Cottonwood Idaho



Still Life

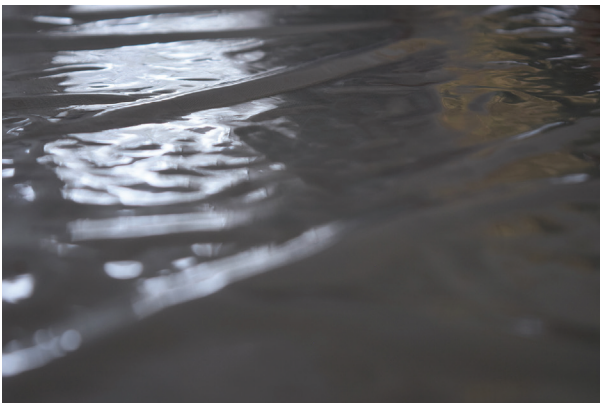
Author: Jonas Kulikauskas

Hand binding: Sister Placida Wemhoff

24 pages

12 color photographs

9" tall by 11.5" wide



Still Life, 2020



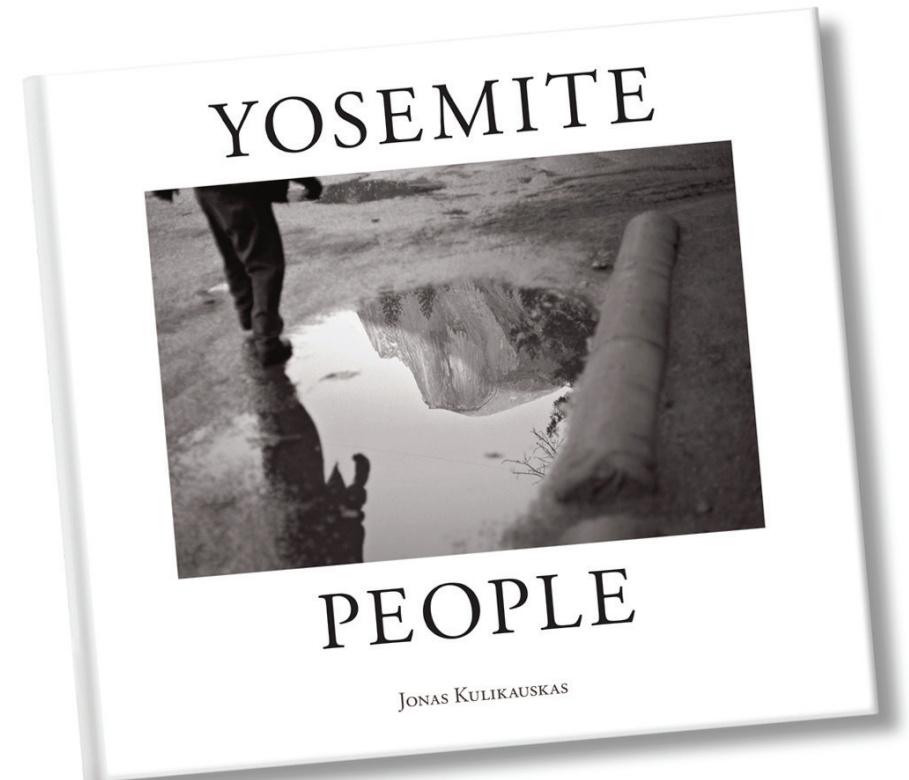
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Yosemite People

2014-16

The concept for Yosemite People was sparked by chance while I waited for my oatmeal in the grand dining room of the historic Ahwahnee Hotel in January 2014. As I was enjoying the scenery of Yosemite National Park through sixteen-foot-tall windows, a member of the wait staff crossed in front of me, obstructing my view. With one clean, crisp motion, she threw a tablecloth into the air and neatly laid it flat. She then proceeded to painstakingly iron out the creases with her hands. I could feel the care being transferred to the next guest. It was lovely. I reached for my camera and took a shot. Although views of Half Dome and Yosemite Falls were mere steps away, my preference was to photograph this person . . . this moment.

Inspired, I ran with this theme and returned to the park with my 35mm camera nineteen times over a two-year period. Of the four million annual Yosemite visitors I observed, there seemed to be a shared, unwritten agreement stating, “Let’s all hurry to the same place to be alone.” The locals on the other hand have a quiet strength and humility. They serve weekend warriors, accept modest living quarters, and coexist in a tightly knit community. The payoff, of course, is waking up every morning in a proverbial paradise.



Yosemite People project details here:

<http://yosemitepeople.com>



Abwahnee Hotel, 35mm film, various sizes, 2014



Yosemite People, California Museum, Sacramento California, installation view, 2020-21 (photos courtesy of California Museum)