

5-2018

# Ice Cream

Richard Frank Peterson  
*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Ceramic Arts Commons](#), [Illustration Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Sociology of Culture Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Peterson, Richard Frank, "Ice Cream" (2018). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2819.  
<http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2819>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact [scholar@uark.edu](mailto:scholar@uark.edu), [ccmiddle@uark.edu](mailto:ccmiddle@uark.edu).

Ice Cream

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts in Art

by

Richard Peterson  
University of Akron  
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics, 2015

May 2018  
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

---

Jeannie Hulen, M.F.A.  
Thesis Director

---

Mike Maizels, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Marc Mitchell, M.F.A.  
Committee Member

---

Dylan Dewitt M.F.A.  
Committee Member

---

Sean Morrissey, M.F.A.  
Committee Member

## **Abstract**

*Ice Cream* is a series of 2D and 3D depictions of lawn ornaments, Charlie Brown, and novelty ice cream bars, which question how White America is indoctrinated through seemingly innocuous images and objects. The exhibition unveils the white supremacy fostered within the American way of life and articulates an environment where Americans act in racist ways when they believe they are acting morally. The research found within *Ice Cream* attempts to dismantle the foundation these justifications are built upon. This honesty, coupled with acknowledging that these historic traditions are rooted in racial constructs, will result in a double consciousness and the ability to move toward building an inclusive human community.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. The Haunting Melody.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. The Faithful Groomsman .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>IV. Facing History.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>V. Bibliography .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>VI. Appendix: Figures .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

*“To understand the actual moral practice of past and present, one needs not merely the standard abstract discussions of, say, the conflicts in people’s consciences between self-interest and empathy with others but a frank appreciation of how the Racial Contract creates a racialized moral philosophy. Whites will then act in racist ways while thinking of themselves as acting morally. In other words, they will experience genuine cognitive difficulties in recognizing certain behavioral patterns as racist.”*

- Charles Mills<sup>1</sup>

Born into a working class family, I grew up outside of Youngstown Ohio in a predominantly white town severely damaged, both socially and economically, by the collapse of the steel industry. It is only in hindsight that I became aware of the degree of influence this environment had on me. Indeed, it took a measure of maturity to begin questioning my upbringing and to start identifying patterns within the social structure I was raised in. In a town I now identify as being segregated, I quickly learned how to navigate a post-industrial landscape as a white man raised within a poor blue-collar family. Born into this society, I had unwittingly signed onto what is termed “The Racial Contract” which replaced the social contract after Youngstown’s battle regarding its economic identity.<sup>2</sup> This contract began to dominate the morality of white working class individuals as middle class status drastically slipped away. Many middle class families who relied on the steel industry for financial stability began to drift into poverty, resulting in race-based ideas of hierarchy to resist lower class identity. These concepts rooted in white supremacy were instated by individuals in order to identify whiteness as a

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles W. Mills, *the Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) 93.

<sup>2</sup> A recognition that racism is *itself* a political system, a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties...though based on a social contract tradition that has been central to Western political theory, it is not a contract between everybody (“we the people”), but between just the people who count, the people who really are people (“we the white people”). So it is a Racial Contract. – Ibid., 3.

currency and privilege while their financial status dissolved. This allowed for whites to remain in power as they started to lose their economic power in the rust belt.

Linda Alcoff, professor of philosophy and race theory at Hunter College, describes this condition in the United States, which was clearly witnessed during the last presidential election. She writes "...that white supremacy has largely been an ideology used by the wealthy and powerful to fool the white poor into being more race-loyal than class-loyal, blinding them to their own interest."<sup>3</sup> I want to clarify I do not believe that all white people have racist intentions, or more importantly that they believe they are not exhibiting racist tendencies. Having said that, even the most liberal of us must deal with our own whiteness, which may manifest itself in ways of which we may not be aware. This acknowledgement of white privilege is something that I often consider. When thinking of how I operate within this country, along with all of its traditions and trajectories, I ask myself what does it mean to be white in America, and how does the history of whiteness in this nation continue to shape the current condition? This is the essence of Linda Alcoff's reiteration of W.E.B. DuBois's double consciousness for the white populace: "Double consciousness requires an ever present acknowledgment of the historical legacy of white identity constructions in the persistent structures of inequality and exploitation, as well as a newly awakened memory of the many white traitors to white privilege who have struggled to contribute to the building of an inclusive human community."<sup>4</sup> Through this she references white societies need to accept its own history with racism, how white privilege has constructed a toxic environment where only it thrives, and the mindfulness of a present existence, in order to change course towards an inclusive society.

I am convinced that White America has turned into a society controlled by pragmatism,

---

<sup>3</sup> Alcoff, Linda Martín. "What Should White People Do?" *Hypatia*13, no. 3 (1998): 6-26,14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

creating a polity guided by an ingrained white supremacist agenda, which started with the first settlers from Europe. And by way of our own descent further into a Racial Contract, we become more and more blinded to America's relation to such a condition. The nations mass consumption of seemingly harmless racial characterizations hinders a move toward that inclusive human community. Continuing through a perpetuating ideology which manifests itself through cartoons and other consumer products, medias depictions of people of color as uneducated, lazy, and criminal fosters the ability for whites to act in racist traditions while self-conceptualizing themselves as acting morally. This privilege has been a trademark passed from generation to generation and has greatly benefited many people on the back of exploitation. "In other words, they will begin to experience cognitive difficulties in recognizing their patterns as racist"<sup>5</sup> As previously stated, the collapse of the middle class within this country rekindled the ideals of hierarchy held within white supremacy. These mentalities when absorbed by a society reinstate a privilege that affects all living under it, positively or negatively. As racial bias states its dominance over economic status, a racial power structure is created that may be all some poor whites have to maintain any sense of self-respect. I myself have been a contributing factor to this mentality, relying on racial hierarchies to uplift myself from being the lowest socially, however, I now feel it is important to actively condemn this ideology.

Given the substantial discussion of race within the thesis and exhibition *Ice Cream*, I feel it is necessary to acknowledge my studio practice is not rooted in an internal battle with my own white guilt. This is instead an attempt to unveil the true identity of white America through an understanding of how racism is passed through generations in explicit and implicit ways. Beginning with a deep understanding through my own racial tendencies I continue to struggle

---

<sup>5</sup> Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 93.

with today, and how they were planted within my ideals. By investigating apocryphal tales of America's past, I may begin to have a clearer depiction of how we arrived at our current state as a country, and how I operated within it. The two-dimensional and three-dimensional works within the exhibition are the physical embodiments of my initiative to excavate the true stories. The work is an attempt to shake the architecture within America's societal structure unveiling the true racist origin embedded in white cultures behavioral patterns and the many ways it operates.

### ***THE HAUNTING MELODY***

The bulk of my childhood education came from immediate surroundings, family and friends, and television. I do not feel alone in this process, as many American children have similar childhood experiences. Spending Saturday mornings in front of the television, I was enchanted by the seemingly endless adventures of Bugs Bunny and other featured characters. As a result, I have elected to utilize the images of various cartoon stars within my sculptural popsicles and drawings. While the likeness may not be accurate, the transformation of these pop-culture icons onto consumer products spurs cultural and individual memory. Through cross-examination, the cast of characters and items recreated serves to question memories as a plethora of racial stereotypes are unveiled from within these seemingly innocuous cartoons. The nostalgic nature of these childhood favorites become tainted with the darker history of explicit and implicit racial depictions of stereotypes. Some eventually were banned from television due to their overtly white supremacist agendas, while others remained on view for decades.

The Warner Brothers "censored 11" may be the most famous of these, pulled from circulation in 1968 after being deemed too overtly racist and insensitive for children. Many of the cartoons continued to play after receiving a few edits, the racial language becoming more implicit while still communicating stereotypes. Elmer Fudd for instance, first appeared in the



Bugs Bunny cartoon “All This and Rabbit Stew” (1941) as a black hunter, however, where white Elmer Fudd’s stupidity is considered generic, as a black man it is a specifically a racial characterization of an uneducated man popular during the time. The collection of sculptural popsicles highlight characters deeply rooted within racist depictions of groups of people, or white supremacist agendas popular within the nation’s history. From Speedy Gonzales, the loveable Mexican speed demon who is constantly saving his “lazy” family from peril, to Yosemite Sam, who can be seen dressed in a Confederate uniform during early skits, even running for president as he promises to keep all the “Rabbits” out of the south.

The combination perfected within novelty ice cream has amalgamated everyone’s beloved cartoon characters into delicious frozen custard. From Bugs Bunny to The Ninja Turtles, these cartoons form relations across generational gaps. With this mixture the ice cream truck has become simultaneously a contemporary and historic figure in the American dream. The truck strums the heart strings of older generations as a reference to the “good ol’ days” of The Looney Tunes, who are pictured alongside new favorite cartoon characters, all being horribly depicted in a cold sugary treat.

As the ice cream truck rolled through my own neighborhood last summer, belting the classic folksong *The Turkey in the Straw*. A melody instantly throwing me into the motions of running inside to frantically search for a few loose dollars, to run outside, to then stare down the road for any sign of its arrival. My mouth watering as I became reminiscent of my own childhood, eyes scanning the beautiful colors among the pictures of my favorite cartoons on the outside of the truck... becoming drastically let down after I enthusiastically tore open the package, only to lose myself within a ghastly depiction of my childhood hero. Bruce Wayne’s deep black bubblegum eyes gazing back at me murmuring “there has to be something more here, there has to be something.” And I knew it, something was trying to

fool me, something I had believed for so long. Batman told me so.

A deep need to understand began to grow within myself, I had to explore the imperceptible history traveling within this vehicle. Through this expedition, my search eventually brought me to a 2014 NPR article written by Theodore Johnson III titled “Recall that Ice Cream Truck Song? We Have Unpleasant News for You.”<sup>6</sup> In which he wrote on the history of the American folk song *The Turkey in the Straw* which had been originally brought to America by Scottish immigrants under the title *The Old Rose Tree*. *The Turkey in the Straw* remains the most common melody ice cream trucks use today, competing with *Dixie*, and *Jimmy Crack Corn*. In the article he made the correlation between the trucks use of the melody and the 1916 Columbia Records release of a song written by a black faced musician by the name of Harry C. Browne, who titled the track *N\*\*\*\*\* love a Watermelon HA! HA! HA!*

Browne: “You N\*\*\*\*\* quit throwing them bones and come down and get your ice cream”

Black Men: “Ice Cream!?”

Browne: “YES! Ice cream! The colored man’s ice cream! Watermelon!!!”

The first ice cream truck was created in 1920 by Harry Burt of Youngstown Ohio, who was also the owner of Good Humor Ice Cream. Mr. Burt’s development of the ice cream truck was four years after Columbia records release of *N\*\*\*\*\* love a watermelon HA! HA! HA!* The melody *The Turkey in the Straw* was one of many folk songs appropriated throughout the history of black faced minstrels prior to 1916. Harry C. Browne and Columbia records was only reinstating its place among societies mainstream media during the time. In this sense Burt’s usage of the melody was either a display of his privilege to

---

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, III Theodore R. "Recall That Ice Cream Truck Song? We Have Unpleasant News for You." NPR. May 11, 2014. Accessed January 27, 2018.

neglect the song's racist history, or approval and appropriation of the melody's popularity, which was gained through connection to the black face minstrels. Sadly, I feel there is little in this country's past that is not rooted in some type of foundational racism.

While the story of the ice cream truck and the original song are fascinating, the response to Mr. Johnson's article was what captured my attention. A number of people arguing the relationship between the history of the song and the contemporary ice cream trucks usage was stretched too far and thin to grasp any real merit. Disputing *The Turkey in the Straw* was a historic American tradition originally named *The Old Rose Tree*, and existed in Europe before ever crossing the Atlantic. Therefore, the song had no ties to American racism, but this itself is the common practice of negating history.

After arriving on American soil the song was employed by the many white men who traveled through the Appalachian region. These men would paint their faces black and sing this melody in a theatrical play to denigrate African-Americans after the Emancipation Act of 1862. Along with men who participated in this vulgar act, the trope was adapted into early American cartoons seen commonly depicted in similar costume and face paint of the more popular minstrels of that time. These were made famous by studios such as Disney and Warner Brothers who also used the folksong disputed. None of this information was ever addressed in the many rebuttals to Theodore Johnson III's article, sent from the many distraught individuals who found it difficult to believe how their beloved ice cream truck song would ever be declared racist. And indeed, to all of them it was not guilty of racism, nor could it ever be guilty, as long as you chose to misinterpret, misunderstand, and blatantly ignore the other 95% of the song's history after it became a part of American culture. Because even after someone tells you all of the historic facts, admitting them as factual would drastically shift your belief system so much you would feel the movement. I believe this is

exactly what James Baldwin referred to when arguing that white supremacy “forced (white) Americans into rationalizations so fantastic that they approached the pathological, generating a tortured ignorance so structured that one cannot raise certain issues with whites. Because even if I should speak, no one would believe me... they would not believe me precisely because they would know that what I said was true”.<sup>7</sup> The many people responding in disparity to Johnson’s writing, may have been doing so simply because deep down they knew it was true, but could not possibly face what this realization would mean to their perceived world.

When confronting these realities of prejudices which have been engrained through upbringing and social norms, it becomes difficult to maintain a positive self-image. Considering for myself that self-image was at one time reliant upon the social currency of whiteness. I became overwhelmed by the unveiling of a societal prejudice and ghastly history I was a part of, a realization made visible that is now embarrassing to admit. Mills addresses this saying “for the Racial Contract there is a real choice for whites, though admittedly a difficult one.” Rejecting the Racial Contract and facing the nature of inequality within the white polity. This requires individuals to speak out and struggle together with those who are oppressed under the terms of the Contract. Because “by unquestioningly “going along with things,” by accepting all the privileges of whiteness with concomitant complicity in the system of white supremacy, one can be said to have consented to Whiteness.”<sup>8</sup>

The larger sculptural depictions of ice cream characters begin within the revealing of societies implicit history with racism. Five characters are recreated as nine-foot tall popsicles who crookedly smile back at you. I have chosen these characters under the conditions of:

---

<sup>7</sup> Baldwin, James. *The Fire next Time*. New York: Vintage International, 1993, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 97.

Their relation to the blackfaced minstrels of Americas past, Mickey Mouse's cartoon Mellerdrammer (1933) opens with himself and Clarebelle Crow applying blackface makeup. The cartoons depictions of racial stereotypes such as the ones embedded within Speedy Gonzales, or Chuck Jones's play on the classic battle of good and evil, famously illustrated in Bugs Bunny and the black body of Daffy Duck. Their massive depictions begin to remove the ability to dispute the implicit racial language hidden within the ice cream truck and cartoons.

I ask a slightly different question within the smaller clay popsicles: How could a novelty ice cream cone's meaning be altered if its purpose was to explicitly perpetuate a white polity? Would children still line up excitedly to purchase a President Trump cinder block shaped popsicle whose packaging included the text: "BUILD THE WALL, BUILD THE WALL!!!"? The majority of the smaller ceramic works feature imagery that challenges positive expectations, and reinforces the negative views commonly seen within contemporary society regarding race and class. Their presence taints the familiarity accompanying these icons shifting their nostalgic nature into a different light. Removing them from the shadows, a plethora of racial tropes hidden within the favorited cartoon characters and pop-cultural icons are exposed to question the guidance of societal views.

Given the current political and social landscape, one can question how the copious amounts of jingoism within various American communities will influence children. It is easy to see how pathological conditions may affect individuals, as well as large groups of people, who attempt to ignore a culture manifesting a vitriolic reflection of its own savagery. Charles Mills posits, "one must be educated to see the world within the racial contract. Which actually requires a misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and evasion on matters regarding

race, a structured blindness to the history in order to remain in a white polity.”<sup>9</sup> This ethos is the antithesis of the ice cream truck melody, “The Turkey in the Straw”, who’s history has been blatantly ignored.

### ***THE FAITHFUL GROOMSMAN***

Multiple stories obscure the history of the lawn jockey, one of them being their use as an important form of communication during the underground railroad. As slaves were migrating from south to north, these small statues placed in front of houses were used to signal if the occupant was supportive and would provide sanctuary. Over time aspects of the jockeys, such as type of clothing color or pattern began to inherent symbolism. One of the most common stories involves the fictional character, Jocko Graves. Graves, who was believed to be a young man eager to help George Washington in battle. He appeared as the general prepared his men to cross the Delaware. Washington declared the boy far too young to accompany him into such a battle. But admiring his courage, he requested the boy kept post while his men engaged the British in battle. He knew it would be dark by the time they returned and so requested the boy keep a lantern lit. Jocko would have been the beckoning lighthouse calling them home after the glorious victory for America. Many hours later Washington and his men returned home in acclaim guided only by the flickering light of Jocko’s lantern. Upon the soldiers return, they found the boy had frozen to death in the night tending to the horses. Jocko still clutching the lantern tightly in his hand. Washington touched by the boy’s bravery requested a statue made in Jocko’s honor. The first president named the statue “The Faithful Groomsman” in honor of Jocko’s dedication to the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 97.

revolution. The statue has been on Washington's property in Mount Vernon ever since.

Nevertheless, in 1987 a historian at Mount Vernon wrote a letter to Epoch Pratt Free Library, marked from Ellen McCallister Clark, the Mount Vernon head Librarian, who said "the story is apocryphal; conveying heroism among blacks during the Revolutionary War and General Washington's humanitarian concerns, but it is not based on an actual incident. Neither a person by the name of Jocko Graves, nor the account of a person freezing to death while tending to Washington's horses has been found in any extensive records of the period. Likewise, the Mount Vernon estate was inventoried and described by a multitude of visitors over the years and there has never been anything resembling a "jockey" statue on the grounds. I have put it in the category with the cherry tree and the silver dollar, fictional tales."<sup>10</sup>

Jocko, who is usually believed to be a real, was one of the main proponents of lawn jockeys not being racist objects. This idea is disputed in a letter by David Pilgrim, Curator of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University. He was responding to the statement from someone that lawn jockeys are "something that black people should be proud of," and actually not a racist object. In which he writes "some people find lawn jockeys nostalgic, reminiscent of the "good ol' days" of Jim Crow segregation. The black-faced servant with the stooped back is a reminder of the decades when Blacks occupied the bottom rung on America's racial hierarchy -- a time when Blacks "knew their place." After World War II, White residents of new housing developments, "perhaps to give themselves more of a sense of being a member of the privileged master class, began placing 'Jocko' on their lawns in great numbers," I can tell you that more than a half-century later lawn jockeys are still seen by African Americans

---

<sup>10</sup> Pilgrim, David, and Debby Irving. *Watermelons, Nooses, and Straight Razors: Stories from the Jim Crow Museum*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2017, 46-47.

as markers of "White space," objects that send this message to Blacks: "You are not welcome here."<sup>11</sup> Yet, Jocko's story is a rather interesting one which becomes upsetting when you realize the fictional death of a boy made hero has been created to alter an object away from its original intent, communicate a white space and promote segregation, and make someone who is white not a racist for displaying a negative characterization of a black man in their front yard. All of this regardless of what it communicates to someone outside of their own identity.

Jocko joins a long list of tales which alter and shift history away from America's racial prejudice. State textbooks have even veiled the true identity of colonial America. In the case of Jocko, the original creation of the lawn jockey may not be decipherable due to the fact that no patents are on file. However, it would be extremely unlikely that anyone could argue overtly characterized depictions of black men created during this period should not be seen as a vehicle made specifically for oppression. This becomes even more evident when you consider the horrible and degrading caricatures of black individuals featured on items such as salt and pepper shakers, piggy banks, cartoons and other trinkets between the 1920's and 1960's. When looking at a timeline of the aforementioned trinkets and the development of the lawn jockey, an argument could be made these small statues should be viewed as an affordable and personal Confederate statue. It is equally difficult to place any relevance in the argument that a jockey's presence in a contemporary neighborhood does not simultaneously communicate a white space. The statues are a subtle nod to the "good ol' days" of white supremacy and oppression.

---

<sup>11</sup> Pilgrim, David. "Lawn Jockeys - July 2008." Are Negroes Closer to Apes Than to Humans? - Letters to the Jim Crow Museum - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University. Accessed Oct, 2017.



I do not remember the exact first time I encountered a lawn jockey, but I cannot imagine he stood much taller than me at the time. Perhaps I laughed at his appearance or even referred to him as being cute, but it is difficult to imagine I sustained those thoughts as he loomed over me. I was not able to see him outside of being a representation of a man, due to my stature we would have stood eye to eye. I found myself within his gaze more than he was mine. Recently, I have tried to replicate this feeling through my ceramic renditions of the two most popular depictions of the lawn jockey. Even with the highest hopes, I cannot experience the jockeys the same way I did as a child. The sheer fact that I know what they represent taints my ability to see them as fun or whimsical. So, it is with this awareness of history, as well as my white privilege, I chose to replicate these objects. I know these objects were originally created by white individuals with intent of mimicking what may viewed as inferior people. By utilizing heavily characterized faces, pitch black skin, and jolting white eyes, the lawn jockeys become common tropes used in both past and present.

After researching the history of the lawn jockey, I am affected by their omnipresent gaze as we stand eye to eye once again. Yet I also imagine that recognizing this discomfort is proof that we operate under a racial contract. In my current two dimensional and three dimensional work, I want to create this same awareness in the viewer. While I chose to use historic cartoon characters as a vehicle, one can draw a line from the ridiculously characterized depictions of people of color made in cartoons during times of great oppression, and the continual perpetuation of racial stereotypes present in American media today. My desire to use surrogates mimics the ways in which folklore, and cartoons themselves, often veiled its language when addressing race. Like a song that's lyrics and tune become more discernable as you approach, the ideology embedded in the work is rooted in familiarity.

## ***FACING HISTORY***

When looking at artwork and its ability to make me feel uneasy, I always return to Philip Guston's Paintings of the hooded men. These pictures uncomfortably depict the fiendish normalcy of klansman life as depicted by him. I imagine Guston asking: What would it be like to be that evil? To plot, destroy, and to kill? The noted historian, Robert Slifkin, suggests a correlation in the paradigms between Guston's klansman paintings and Robert Smithson's non-site works. "Where Smithson's non-site works formed spatial and temporal notions between the gallery space where they were exhibited and their geographical regions from which their materials were taken, Guston's Marlborough paintings consistently refer to things beyond themselves, especially events and objects a historical past."<sup>12</sup> While Guston was able to create powerful statements about what was occurring within the political landscape of his youth and later years, he was depicting these images as an outsider. Guston especially in adulthood, enjoyed a tremendous amount of privilege and did not create these works as a member of the Klu Klux Klan nor was he a member of the African-American community. However, the fact that I was raised in a community that often celebrated and rewarded whiteness, while condemning other individuals of color, I feel as though I am creating work from a more understood perspective within that very system and culture. I know what it is like to be that evil, because I once was. Though what Guston was able to accurately portray was the casualness of racism, I feel it kept the idea that racism is real, but only looks like white supremacy in relation to the KKK. But the reality is we still live in a society where all are to blame for our current relationship with inequality. It is a result of a legacy of racial oppression we may not have created, but all continue to be a part of. Which

---

<sup>12</sup> Slifkin, Robert. *Out of Time: Philip Guston and the Refiguration of Postwar American Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013, xiii.

returns us to the impact of the racial contract that has historically controlled America. A national legacy rooted in a history of oppression and inequality that contributes to the of all Caucasians, not just those who are categorized as white supremacist. In order to really initiate meaningful change regarding racism white communities need to begin to recognize and confront their fears. This honesty, coupled with acknowledging the historic traditions rooted in racial constructs, will result in a double consciousness and the ability to build an inclusive human community. We may not currently be in a space to declare an immediate position of change in this society, but we are in a space to change the institutional structure for generations to come.

While I have elected to focus on the relationship of racism to the white community, I openly acknowledge this is just one component of a larger epidemic. These issues affect all communities and are not limited to race, religion, and socio-economic or political categories. Recently, I have heard of people of all races and creeds feeling alienated in environments we consider liberal and unbiased in regards to racial or social hierarchies. With the exhibition, *Ice Cream*, I attempt to create an experience that provides no space to avoid the history of racism in the familiar, removing that buffer, each object becomes a space where you must face the truly haunting nature of whiteness.

## ***BIBLIOGRAPHY***

Mills, Charles W. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire next Time*. New York: Vintage International, 1993.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2005.

Slifkin, Robert. *Out of Time: Philip Guston and the Refiguration of Postwar American Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Wise, Tim J. *White like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. New York: Soft Skull Press, 2005.

Pilgrim, David. "Lawn Jockeys - July 2008." Are Negros Closer to Apes Than to Humans? - Letters to the Jim Crow Museum - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University. Accessed Oct, 2017.

Pilgrim, David, and Debby Irving. *Watermelons, Nooses, and Straight Razors: Stories from the Jim Crow Museum*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2017.

Johnson, III Theodore R. "Recall That Ice Cream Truck Song? We Have Unpleasant News for You." NPR. May 11, 2014. Accessed January 27, 2018.

Gest, Justin. *The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Alcoff, Linda Martín. "What Should White People Do?" *Hypatia*13, no. 3 (1998): 6-26.

**APPENDIX: FIGURES**



Figure 1: Richard Peterson, *Ice Cream* (Gallery View), 2018. (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 2: Richard Peterson, Grouping of Smaller Popsicles, (top to bottom) *Bugs*, *Kermit*, *Scoobydoo*, *Ski-Mask*. Dimensions Variable, Ceramic, Glaze Fired, Cone 02, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 3: Richard Peterson, Grouping of Smaller Popsicles, (Top Left to Bottom Right) *SpongeBob, Pac-Man Ghost, Tomb Stone, Cig, White Power Ranger*, Dimensions Variable, Ceramic, Glaze Fired, Cone 02, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 4: Richard Peterson, Grouping of Small Popsicles, (Top Left to Bottom Right) *Good-Year*, *Camel Smokes*, *Wal-Mart*, *Monopoly*, *The Duke*, *Cop Car*, Dimensions Variable, Ceramic, Glaze Fired, Cone 02, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)





Figure 5: Richard Peterson, *Cinder Block*, 12.5" x 7" x 1", Ceramic, Glaze Fired, Cone 02, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 6: Richard Peterson, *Speedy Gonzales*, 108" x 47" x 13", Wood, Bed Sheets, Ceramic, Latex Paint, Printed Fabric, Upholstered, Hand Stitching, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 7: Richard Peterson, *Bugs Bunny*, 124" x 46" x 12", Wood, Bed Sheets, Ceramic, Latex Paint, Printed Fabric, Upholstered, Hand Stitching, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 8: Richard Peterson, *Mickey Mouse*, 114" x 44" x 13", Wood, Bed Sheets, Ceramic, Latex Paint, Printed Fabric, Upholstered, Hand Stitching, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 9: Richard Peterson, *Yosemite Sam*, 113" x46" x12", Wood, Bed Sheets, Ceramic, Latex Paint, Printed Fabric, Upholstered, Hand Stitching, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 10: Richard Peterson, *Daffy Duck*, 116" x 46" x 13", Wood, Bed Sheets, Ceramic, Latex Paint, Printed Fabric, Upholstered, Hand Stitching, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)

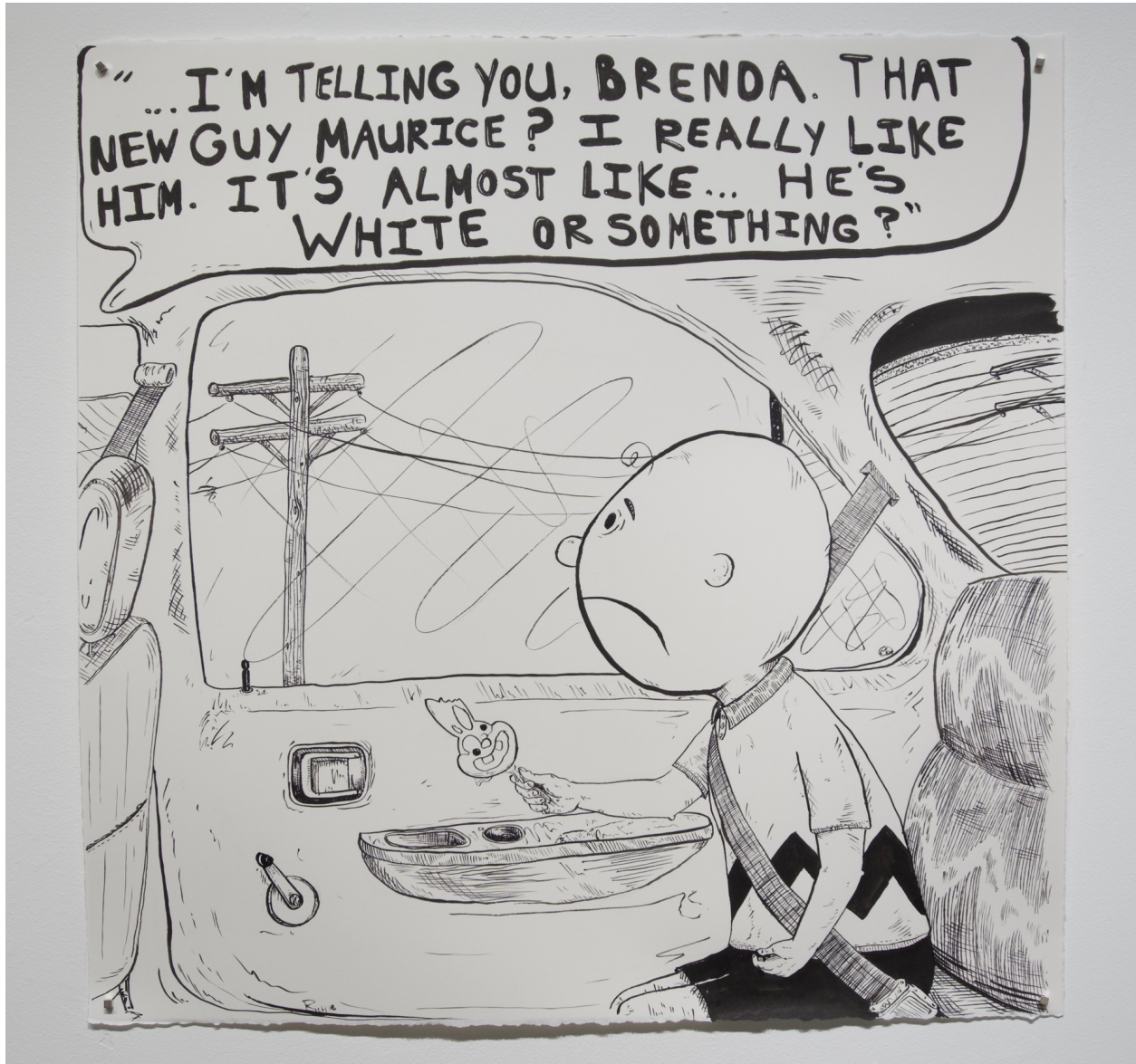


Figure 11: Richard Peterson, *Charlie Brown Comic (I'm Telling You)*, 22" x 22", India Ink on Paper, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)

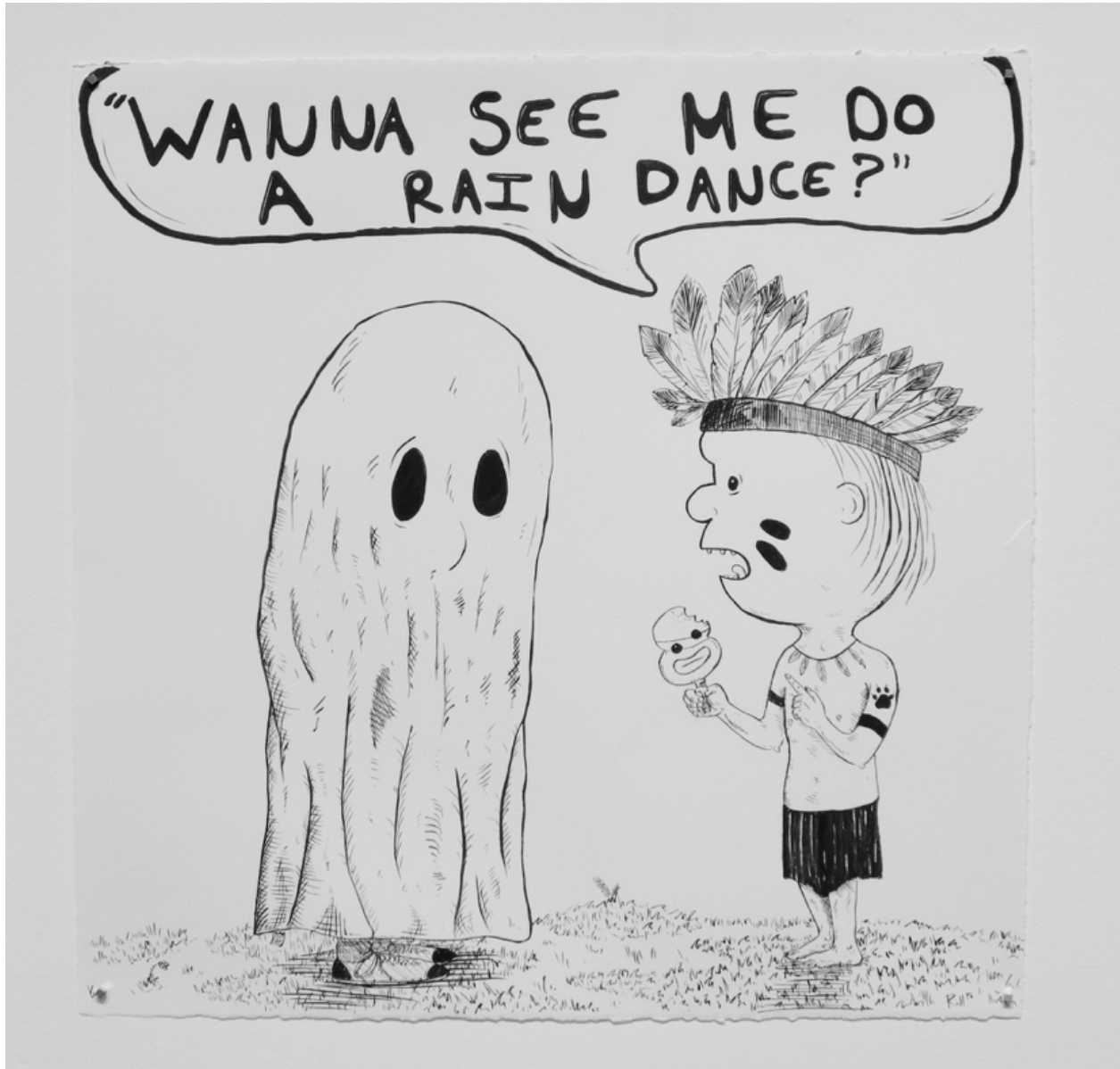


Figure 12: Richard Peterson, *Charlie Brown Comic (Wanna See Me)*, 22" x22", India Ink on Paper, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)





Figure 13: Richard Peterson, *Charlie Brown Comic (Face to Face)*, 22" x22", India Ink on Paper, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 14: Richard Peterson, Installation View of *Lawn Jockeys*, (Left) 78" x 38" x 40", (Right) 76" x 35" x 44", Ceramic, Glaze fired, Cone 02, Artificial Turf, PC-11, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)



Figure 15: Richard Peterson, (*detail*) *Lawn Jockey*, Ceramic, Glaze fired, Cone 02, Artificial Turf, PC-11, 2018 (Image by Lucero Aguirre)