

# *Rosy* Retrospection

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“Documents submitted to the Faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art”

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MFA Thesis Defense

My thesis show, Rosy Retrospection, explores themes of memory and nostalgia. Inspired by southern storytelling and folklore, as well as social and political systems, this work calls on the viewer to reexamine the past. Both our recorded histories and our own personal memories are flawed relics of a former time, contorted and controlled by the recorder. At a time when slogans like, ‘Make America Great Again,’ are chanted by politicians, calling on Americans to reassert the past, I feel we must reconsider what it means to act on nostalgic notions.

The term Rosy Retrospection is a psychological descriptor, related to nostalgia but is rooted in cognitive bias. It refers specifically to the act of remembering the past in a more positive light than reality, while simultaneously comparing those biased ideals to the present. Through this problematic language of nostalgia, both alluring and dangerous, I highlight the often-erroneous assumption, that the past is better. I use oil paint as a vehicle to channel my memories, subconscious retrospection, and apprehension onto the canvas. Dreamlike worlds and faded memories are woven together to become chromatic representations of the human condition. Cherished memories and deep-seated fears exist side by side in disjointed harmony.

Through painting and installation, I create domestic vignettes inspired by the 1950’s and 60’s, a time often heralded as the American ideal. Drawing on Midcentury consumerism, advertising and simulated idealism, the brilliant colors and fanciful patterns used in these modes seep into imagery of my manufactured domestic spaces. While we know all is not rosy just beneath

the surface, cheery, happy colors became the look of the decade. In a sense, they became the facade. These seemingly happy colors provide a backdrop on which to highlight my problematic narratives and to create my artificial environments.

In referencing the domestic, I incorporate old wallpaper, floor tiles, and china patterns into my work. Household textiles such as table linens and barkcloth curtains as well as vintage toys creep in to create a recognizable and nostalgic atmosphere. These elements provide a cheery background to an unpleasant subject. The juxtaposition between these colorful and often endearing patterns and darker subject matter, provided a push and pull of opposites that I find appealing. Though the use of familiar, nostalgic items that might be found in one's grandmother's house or favorite childhood memory, I create an unsettling familiarity. These souvenirs of the past help my viewers access their own nostalgic feelings and emotionally engage with the work.

For some, the memory of the past was not great at all and for others, a distorted idealism could be at work. This dangerous nostalgia and whitewashed collective memory are at the forefront of current events. It is modern day yet rooted in the past. Though the reexamining of our history and collective memory, I initiate larger conversations about contemporary problems. My hope is to turn this dangerous nostalgia into a vehicle for change. American can be great, if we want it, but we have to work on it. I believe that we can change our future for the better. Until that day comes, I will continue to question through art.





*Rosy Retrospection*

**Allison Coleman**

MFA Thesis Defense



*Rosy* Retrospection

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# "memoria praeteritorum bonorum"



**Giovanni Paolo Panini**, Piacenza, 1691 -  
Rome, 1765















# If your husband ever finds out

*you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...*

*... if he discovers you're  
still taking chances  
on getting flat, stale coffee  
... woe be unto you!*

*For today  
there's a sure  
and certain way  
to test for freshness  
before you buy*























Penny Loafers, 2016







show her  
it's a man's world



**Van Heusen** 

REG. U. S. P.



A Life Domestic,  
2016









Slave Street at Boone Hall Plantation, South Carolina. Photo by Kay Gaensler



Griot, by Leroy Campbell, Charleston, SC





Alice of the Hermatage  
Photo by Bill Segars, 2006



"Gullah Boo Hag"









Main Street Pamplico, South Carolina, 2017



BJ's Gas Station across the street from my grandparent's house. The truck has been there since my childhood.  
2017



For recipe-perfect results time after time Hotpoint (1959)





1940's Home



1950's Home







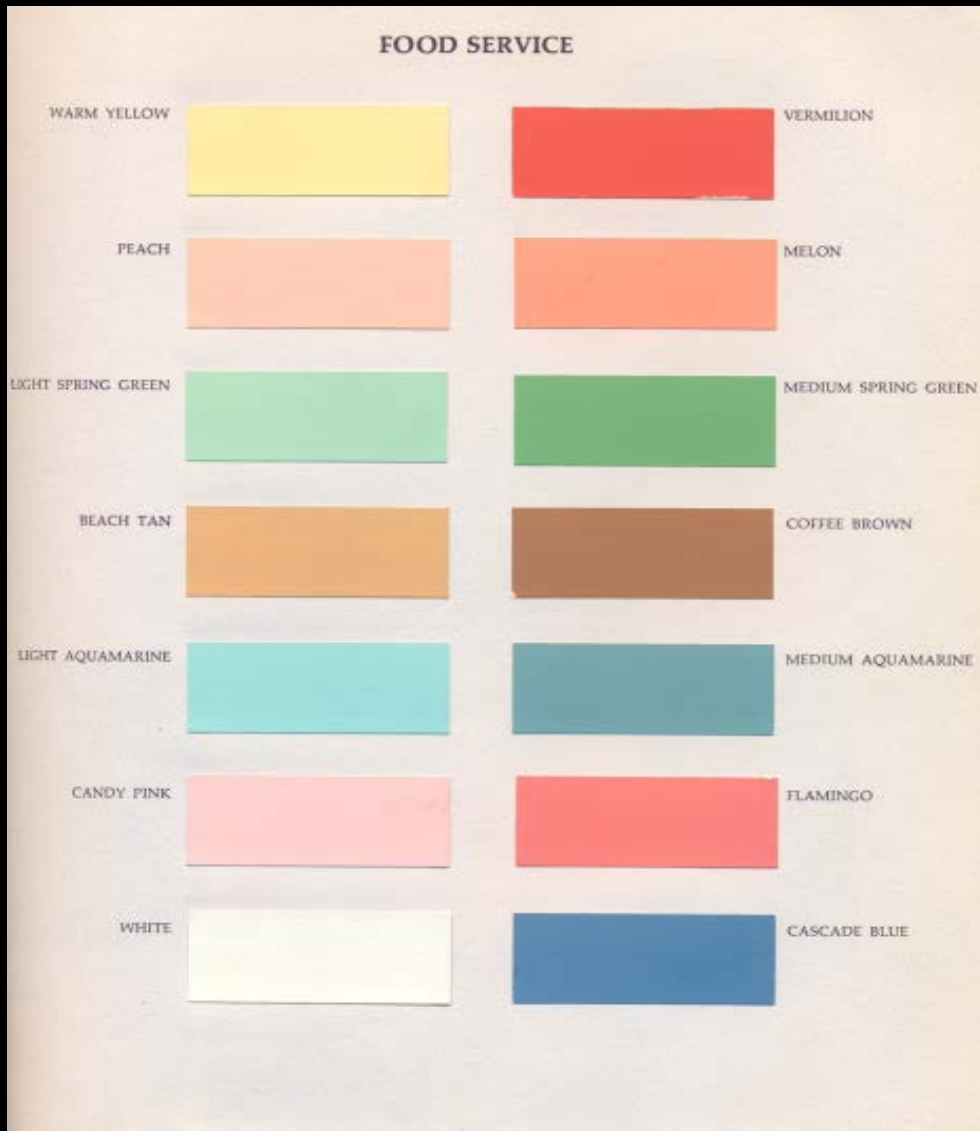


Decay and a 45, 2018









Birren, Faber. 1963. *"Color for Interiors, Historical and Modern: An Essential Reference Work Covering the Major Period Styles of History and Including Modern Pallets for the Authentic Decoration of Homes, Institutional and Commercial Interiors"*

Color swatches













Sketch, 1016

1111

*Give her a Hoover  
and you give her the Best*

Isn't this about what a husband really says  
at Christmas time when he gives a Hoover  
Cleaner to a wife—  
"I want you to work less. I want you to have more  
leisure. I want to save your strength. I want to  
make it easier for you to keep the home you're so  
proud of. I want you to have a cleaner to help  
you—and I want you to have the cleanest the world  
has to the best. Merry Christmas to you with this  
Hoover Cleaners."

This Christmas there is a new model, the  
phenomenal Hoover 28. Call your Hoover  
dealer tomorrow for more details or write  
Hoover Cleaners for your book of Christmas.

**THE HOOVER**  
CLEANERS

17 STREETS - ALL IN ENGLAND - ALL IN SCOTLAND  
THE HOOVER CLEANERS COMPANY, LTD.  
LONDON, ENGLAND

THE NEW HOOVER 28  
Cleaning really with maximum  
in half hour's time.

© News Dog Media

December 8, 1948

Vintage Hoover Advertisement

**A NATURAL PLEASURE**

for every woman to satisfy, nourish  
and delight all the family with  
delicious Natural No. 1 Peas

**Natural  
N.º1 Peas**

IN PACKETS AND CANS

WILLER & RILEY (1918) LTD., BOLTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

1950's Marrowfats Peas Advertisement





Tick-Tack, 2017



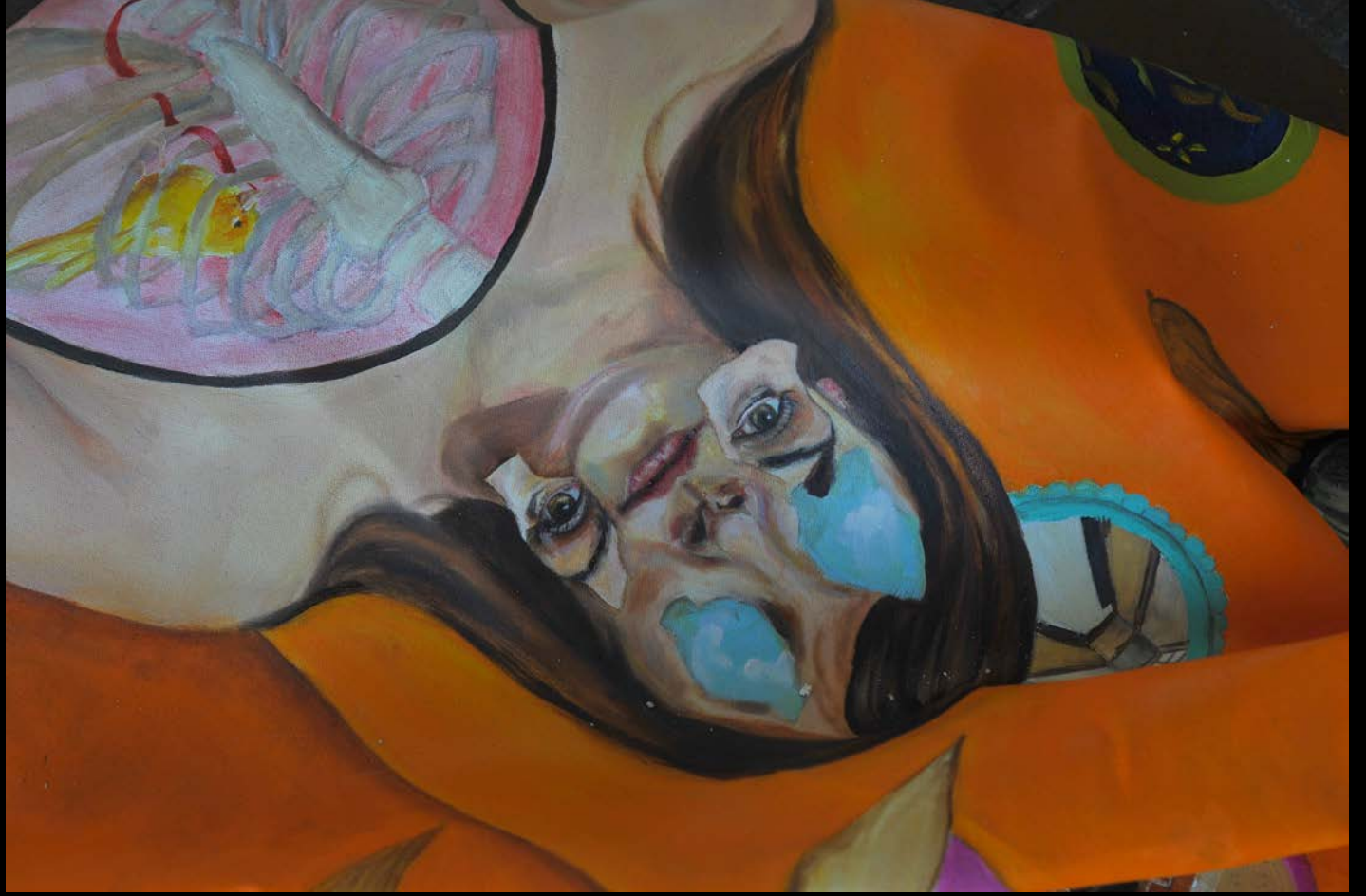












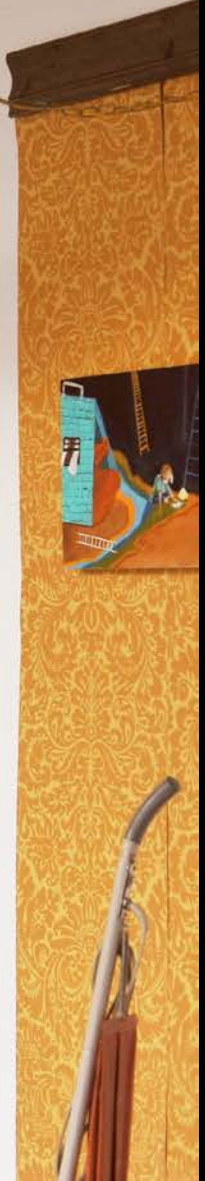






















Planate Perspective, 2018









LIVE

Electrically

AND ENJOY THE DIFFERENCE!

























Thanks for the Conversation (Mea Culpa), 2016





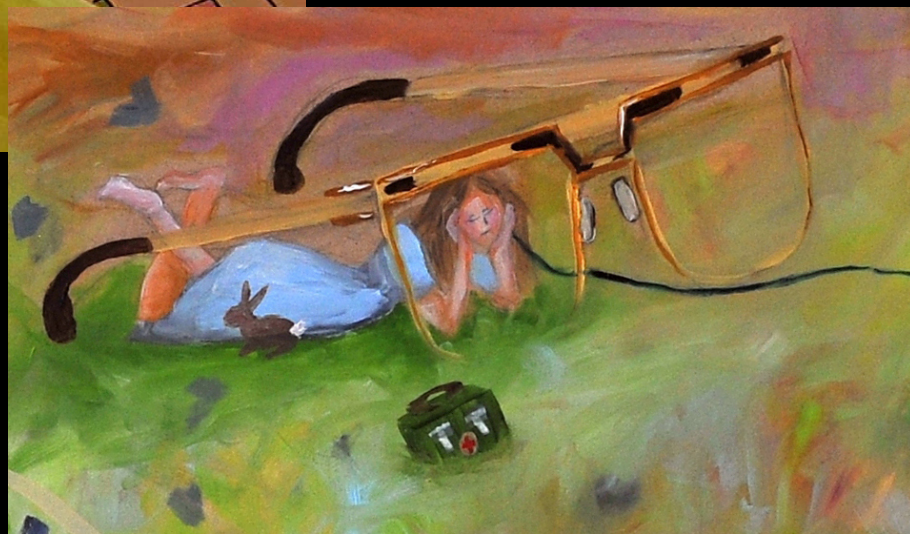




























Post Radiation Sarcoma,  
2017



**32 WEEK NETWORK TV**  
 IS BACKING UP ALL 3 NETWORKS TO BE A SUCCESS!  
 Sales are over \$100 million!

**EASY-BAKE OVEN**  
 BAKES WITH 2 ORDINARY ELECTRIC LIGHT BULBS  
*Over a Million Sold!*  
 Easy-Bake Ovens are household words all over America because they're the easiest, safest, fastest and biggest-value toy oven ever created! One set bakes everything just as fast. Thousands more of Easy-Bake Ovens have created big demand for Betty White and for the additional Easy-Bake sets that make fudge, cookies, pretzels, Winnie the Pooh Honey treats—even bubble-gum! Over 25 delicious treats to eat!

*Backed by 32-week Network TV. 10 Top-Rated Shows. All 3 Networks! More than 150 local market campaigns.*

**SAFETY FEATURES BUILT IN**



**Every good cook has to start somewhere.**

For her, there's no thrill quite like when she bakes that first Betty Crocker chocolate cake in her Easy-Bake Oven.

More than all the fun she'll have, Easy-Bake is a great way for her to create love in warm little bites.

Easy-Bake has built-in safety features, is U. L. approved and bakes with two ordinary light bulbs. And comes with real Betty Crocker mixes.

Easy-Bake. Because she'll love it.

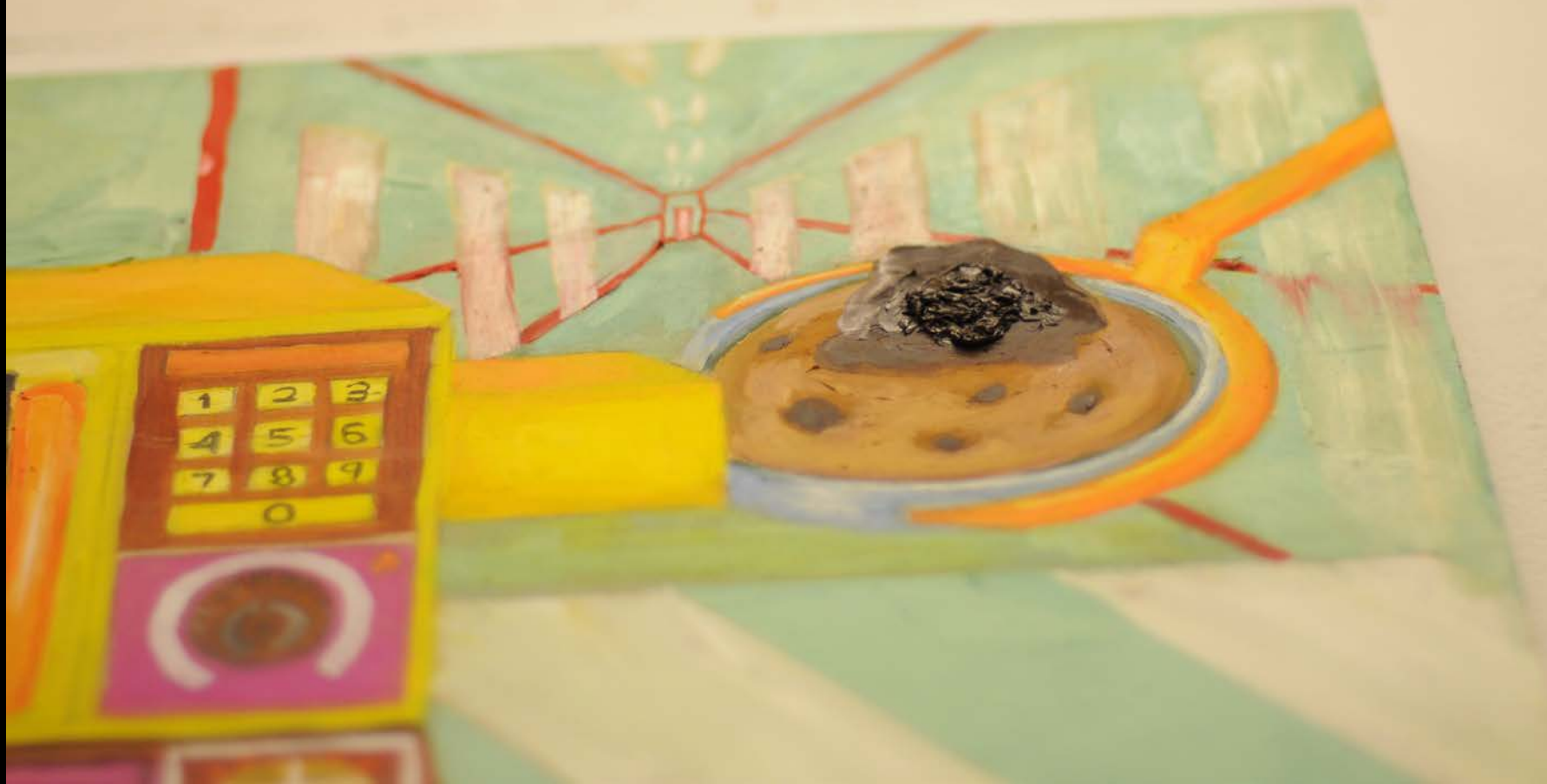

**Easy-Bake Oven**  
 from 


© General Mills Fun Group, Inc.

















According to Clay Routledge, a professor of psychology at North Dakota State University,

“Trump didn’t simply invoke the idea of an idealized past. He provoked the anxious feelings that make nostalgia especially attractive — and effective — as a tool of political persuasion.”





Homecoming, 2017













Thunderbird Postcard











Photo of a Sun City Leisure Lawn included in a March 1963 National Geographic article on Arizona.





Aerial view of Levittown, New York. Image courtesy Mark Mathosian.



Lakewood Park, ca 1952. Photo by William A. Garnett.







Pine-sol, 2016

















Disney's Mickey Mouse gas mask was designed to eliminate children's fear of wearing the chemical warfare preventative device.



Walt Disney showing the sketch of the Mickey Mouse gas mask to Major General William Porter on January 8, 1942. (AP photo)









**WORLD'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING**



1937 photo by Margaret Bourke-White – Breadline during Louisville Flood.



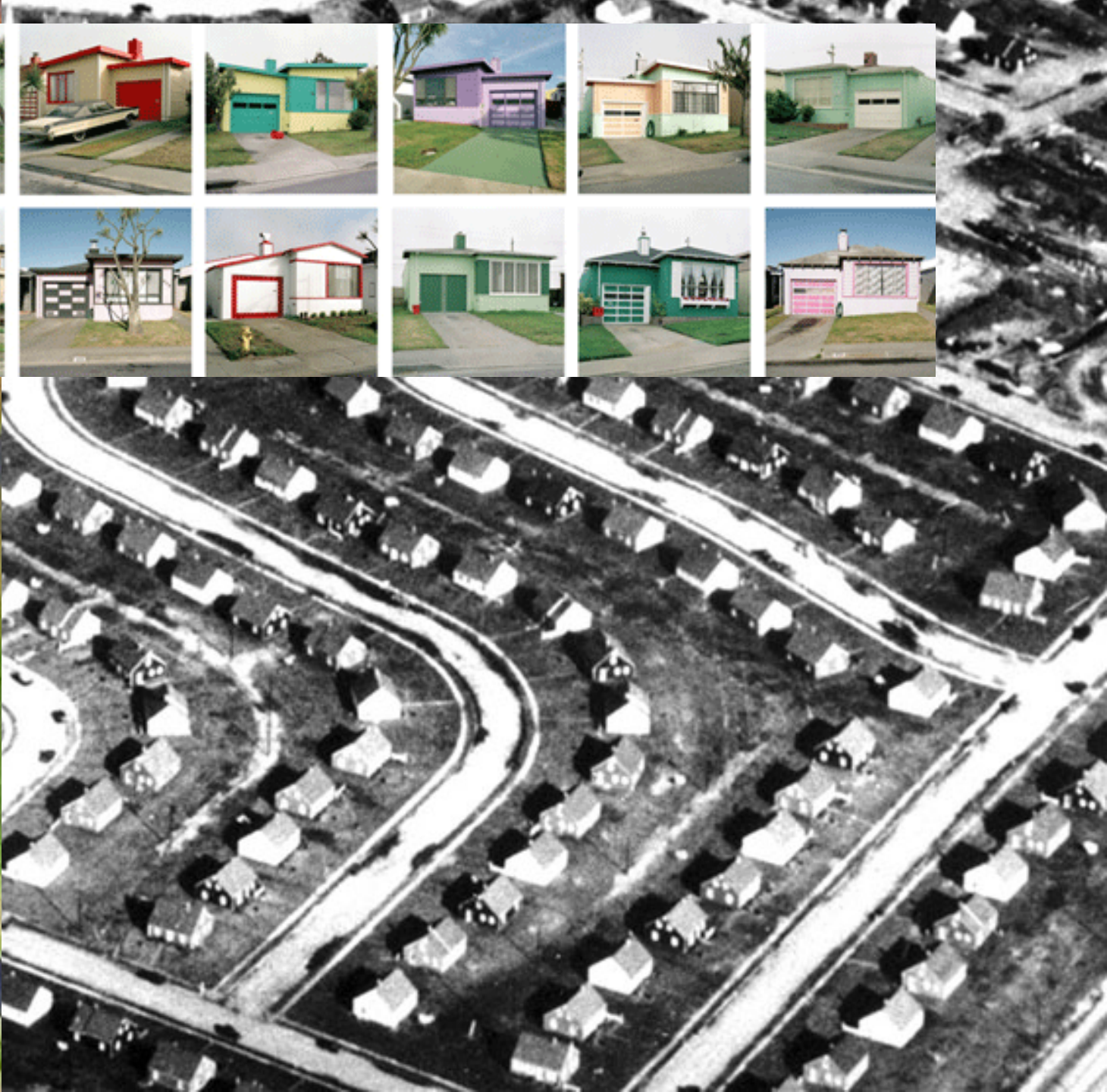


US deputy marshals escort 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, La. The first grader was the only black child enrolled in the school. (AP Photo)



Family of four holding hands while standing in a line with their backs to the camera, facing a ranch-style house in a suburban development in 1965. A sale sign is posted in the front yard of the house. *Getty Images*













Bi-Lo, 2016













Women test enormous quantities of quartz in order to see their effectiveness in radar and radio waves for WW II use. National Institute of Standards and Technology; <http://www.commerce.gov/blog/2012/04/03/nist-1940s>



*Luedell Mitchell and Lavada Cherry at work in the El Segundo Plant of the Douglas Aircraft Company during World War II. (National Archives)*



Women welders, Gary, Ind., 1943. Margaret Bourke-White—The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Imag





Buddy Bunker's photo of the homecoming of Lt. Col. Robert Moore won a 1944 Pulitzer Prize. He's hugging his daughter Nancy as his wife, Dorothy, and nephew, Michael Croxdale, watch.

**SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!**

1. GOSH, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING- AND I'M ALL TUCKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

VITAMINS, DARLING! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS

**Kellogg's PEP**  
VITAMINS-ENRICHED  
100% BLENDED

**Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!\***





Turkey Work, 2017



















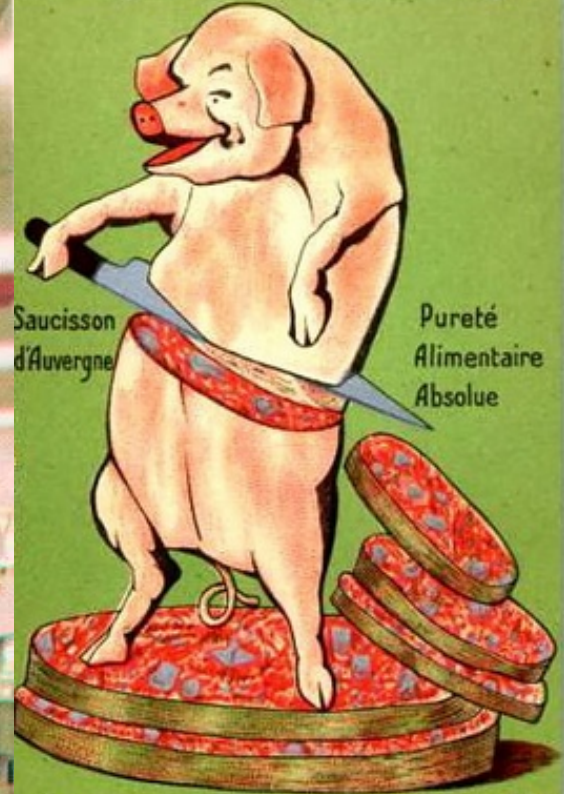


Grade A, 2018





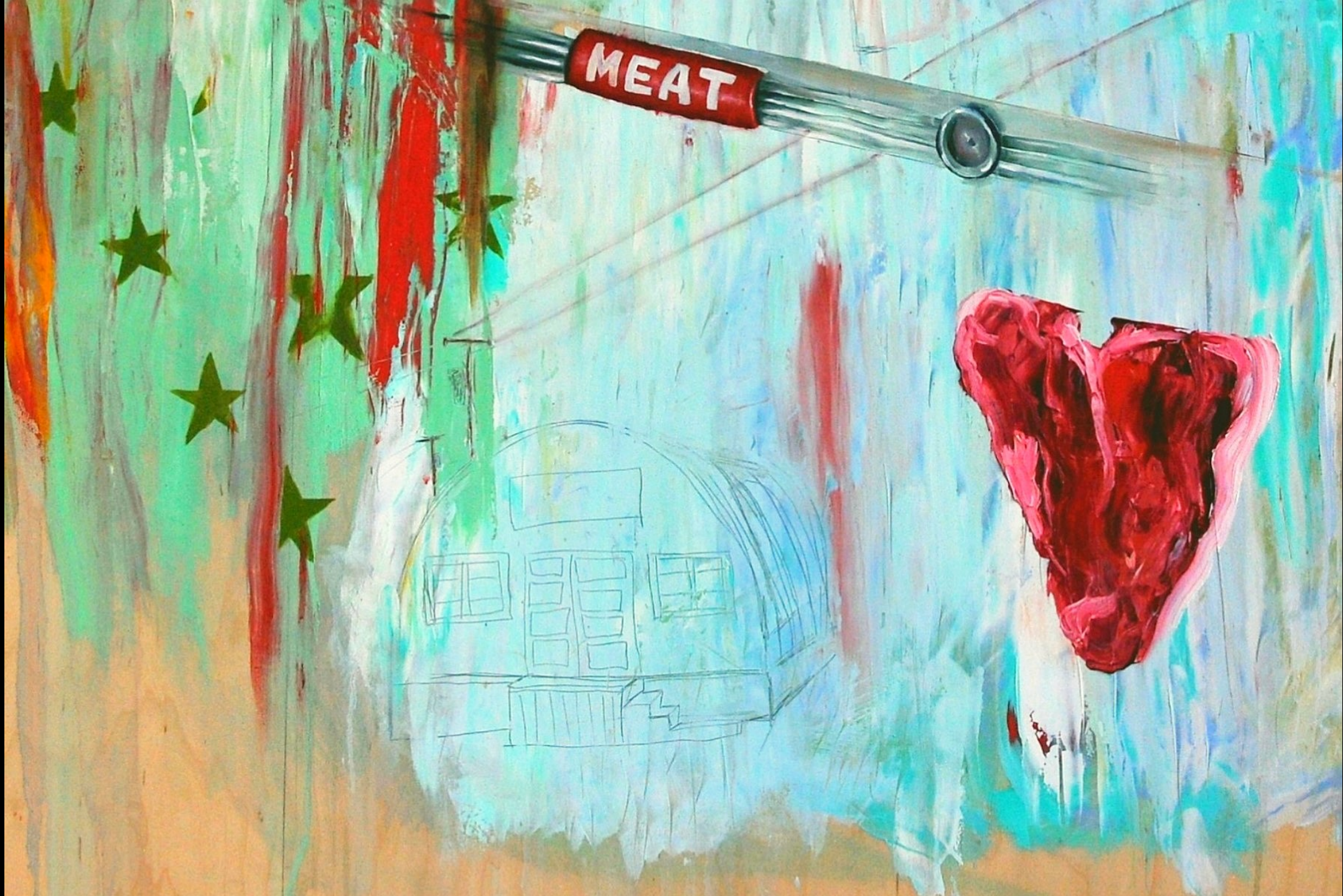
On mange avec plaisir et....sans fatigue :



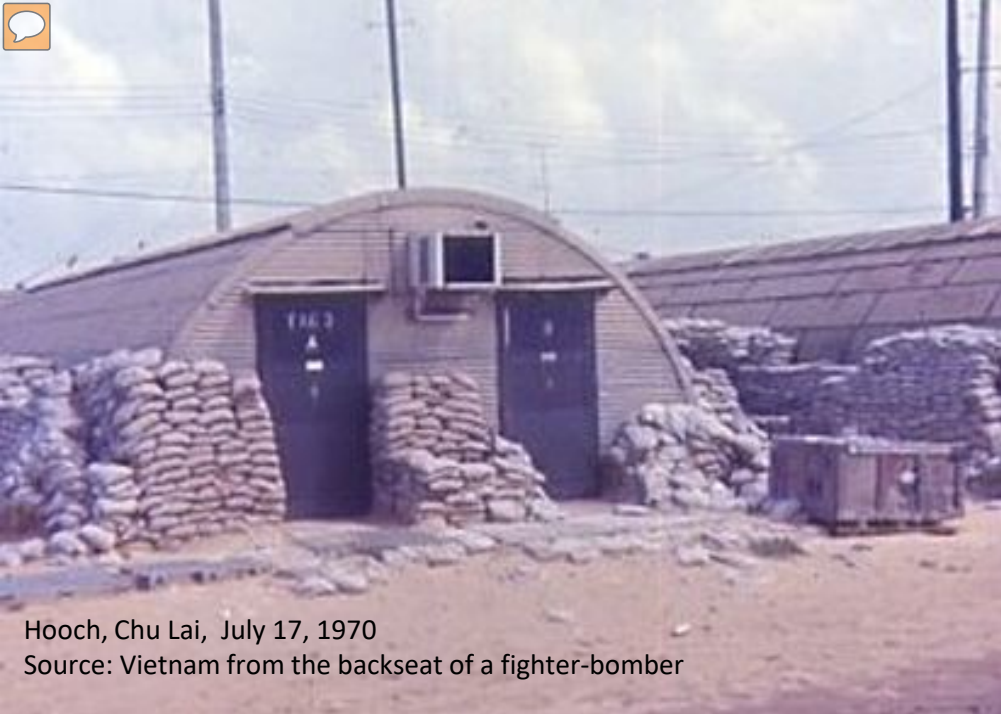
les "bons saucissons du COCHON PRODIGE" !











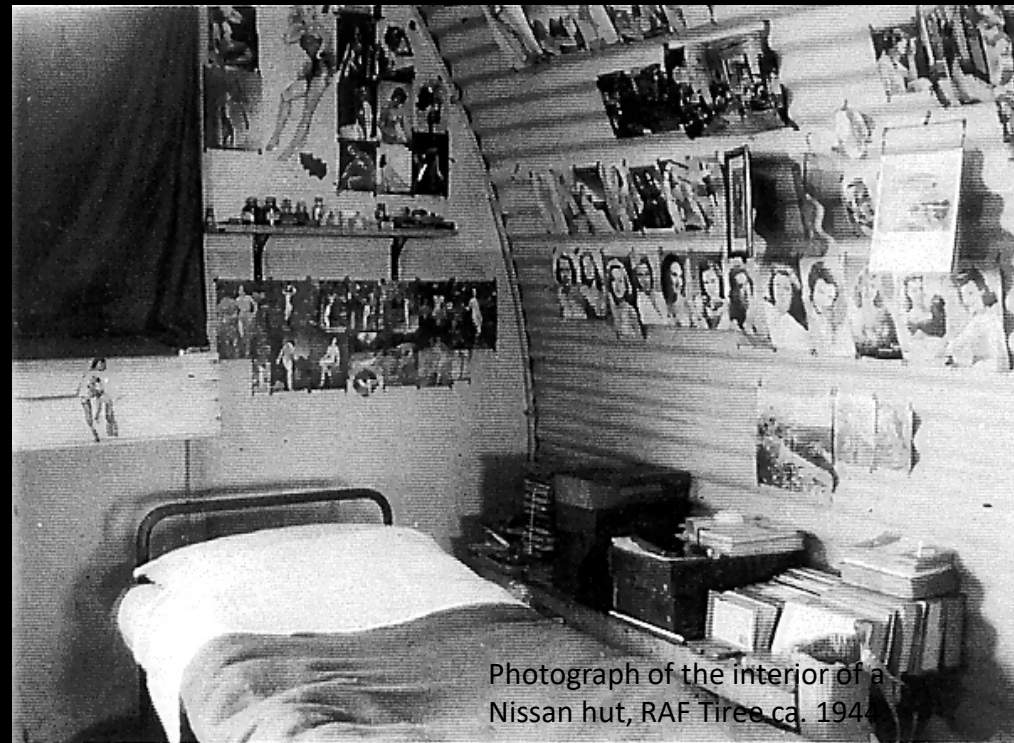
Hooch, Chu Lai, July 17, 1970  
Source: Vietnam from the backseat of a fighter-bomber



1944 barracks at Camp Hanford



Camp Pershing, Iceland 1942



Photograph of the interior of a Nissan hut, RAF Tiree ca. 1944

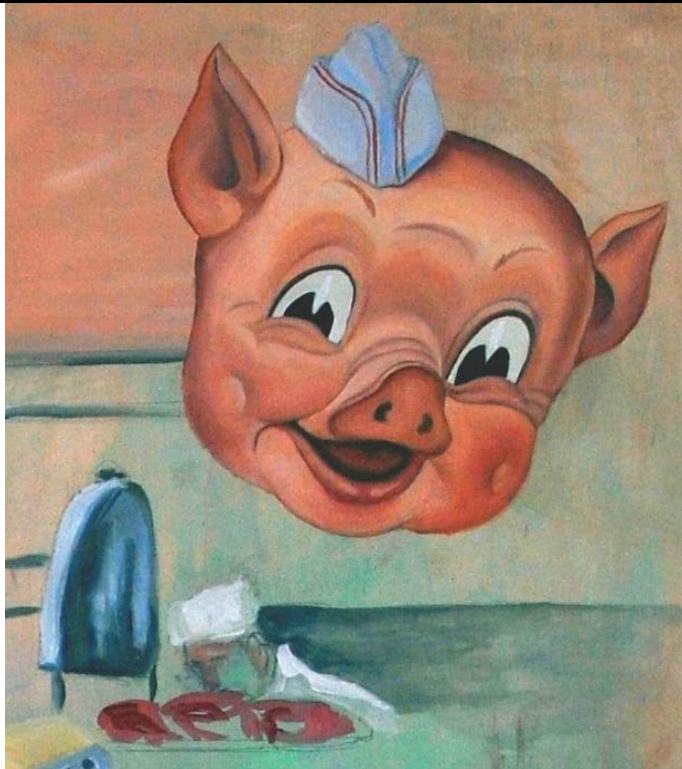


Far from home: American troops settling into their accommodation hut in southern England.  
London News Agency.



Company picnic volleyball game, Saigon, Feb 1967  
Source: Daniel P. Cotts 101st Radio Research Company 1966-'68















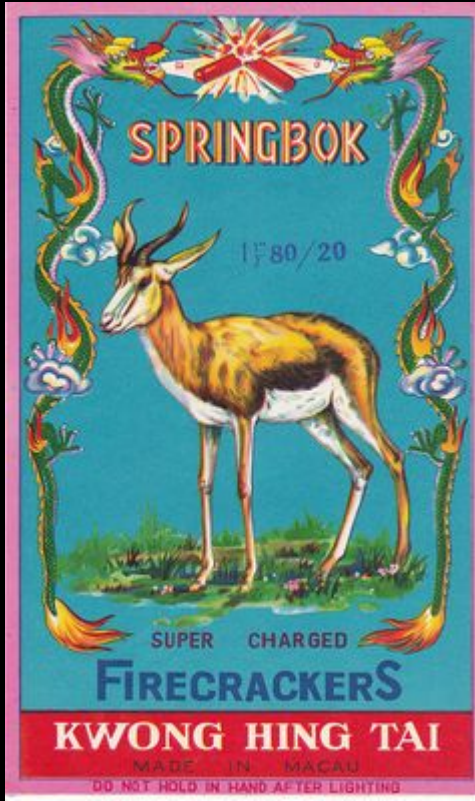






Big Boy Toys, 2018















Thank you





The End



