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FOUR SEASONS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

Morgan Pearce

Bachelor of Fine Arts, School of Visual Arts, 2011

Master of Fine Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014

Director: Matt King, Assistant professor, Sculpture + Extended Media

Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, Virginia

May, 2014

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Thank you Matt King for never failing to have a smart thing to say, for your frankness, for following me.

To my peers:

Jake Borndal, Tal Gafny, Roxanne Yamins, and Omri Zin.

Christine- I am so glad I know you.

Mom, Dad, and Johnny- Thank you for the inspiration and phone calls.

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Abstract

FOUR SEASONS

By Morgan Pearse, MFA.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art in Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014.

Major Director: Matt King, Assistant professor, Sculpture + Extended Media

Fantasy functions in a mental space. Cyberspace is a fantasy world. Cyberspace is a mental space mediated by the individual, but also through/into itself. What does an internal thought mean when it is directed towards strangers via online avatar?

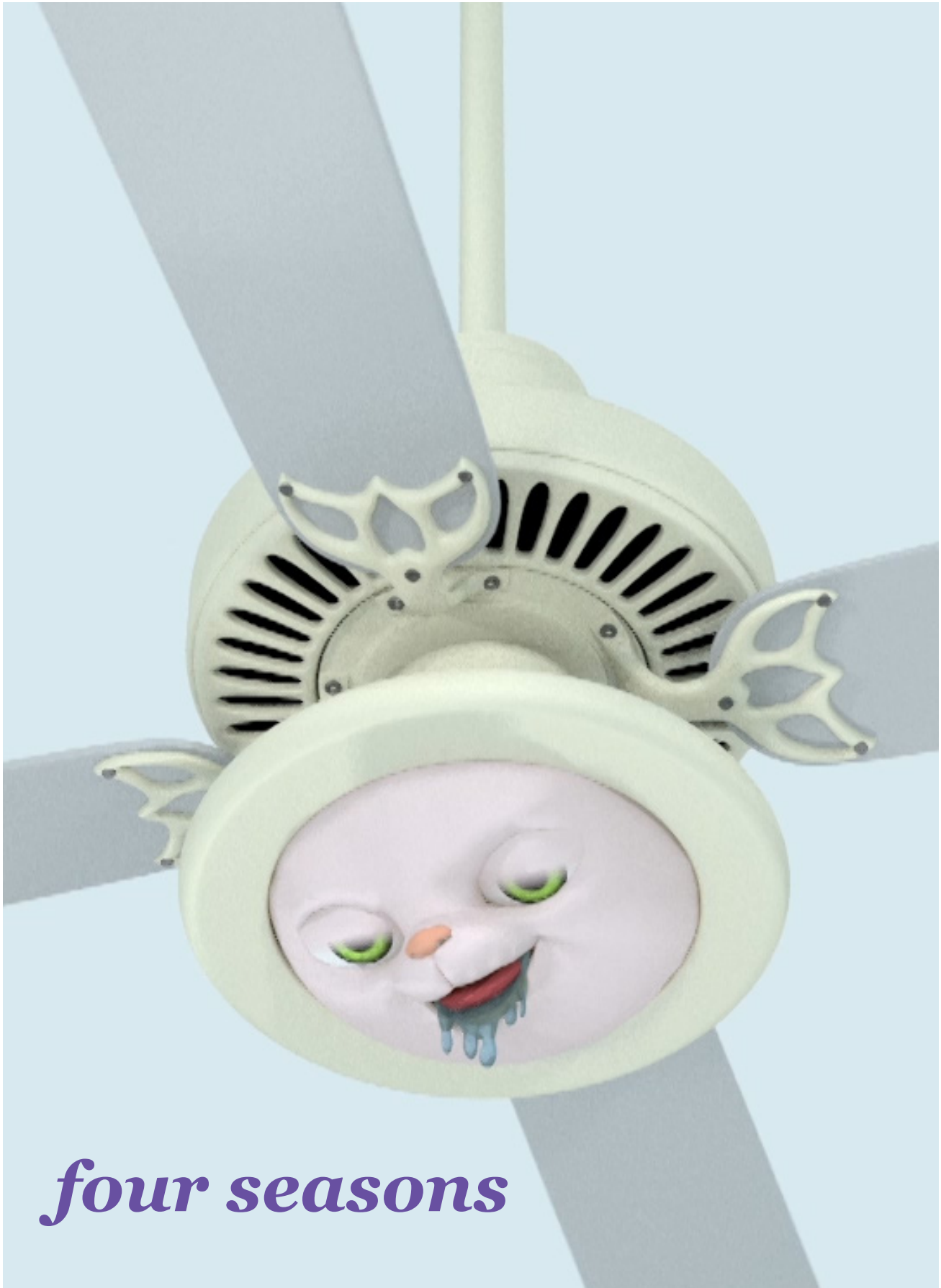
The Internet exists. Your body exists. There is something in between.

There is no singular meaning or defined content. Instead, there are multiple meanings and content(s). “It all depends how you look at it.”

Mystery is important, but it’s better to be entertaining at the same time.

There is no narrative. I’m not a doctor. “This isn’t rocket science.”

The body of this text is comprised of both found and original content.



four seasons

Punk thinks itself. Punk is now a template, an archetype. So, not punk.

But I like the idea of living something as you are thinking it.

I'm trying not to use the term "meta", but that is what I mean. Except, less cold, and with more feeling.

I hope I'm being clear. You know how it is. One small disagreement escalates into an argument, which turns into breaking up and make up sex or then you forget what the argument was "about" and then you do it all over again, slightly different this time.

Everything lasts forever.

I. Dreaming your life, living your dreams



“It’s dangerous to be your own sounding board.”

He means you should test your opinions out on other people so you don’t go crazy by only listening to yourself. He also named me “Morgan Pearse” so I would sound powerful and androgynous in business meetings.

Truth repeats itself until it becomes something else.

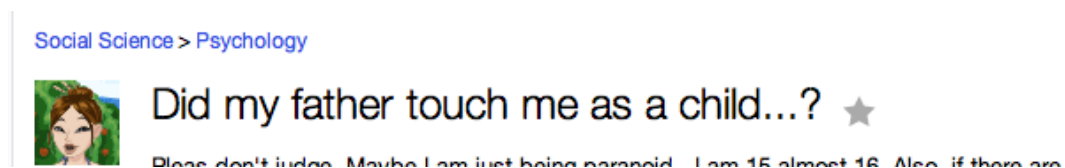
A delusion is commonly defined as a fixed false belief and is used in everyday language to describe a belief that is either false, fanciful or derived from deception. The definition is necessarily more precise and implies that the belief is pathological (the result of an illness or illness process). Delusions typically occur in the context of neurological or mental illness, although they are not tied to any particular disease and have been found to occur in the context of many pathological conditions (physical and mental). However, they are of particular diagnostic importance in psychotic disorders and particularly in schizophrenia.

A fantasy is a situation imagined by an individual or group, which does not correspond with reality but expresses certain desires or aims of its creator. Fantasies typically involve situations which are impossible (such as the existence of magic powers) or highly unlikely (such as world domination). They can also be sexual in nature. In the theory of psychoanalysis, phenomena associated with unconscious desires, fears, and wishes. Sigmund Freud used the word 'Phantasia', which could be translated as 'fantasy', but the meaning is clearly not the same as the everyday meaning and is usually primarily sexual. This should be strongly contrasted with reality.

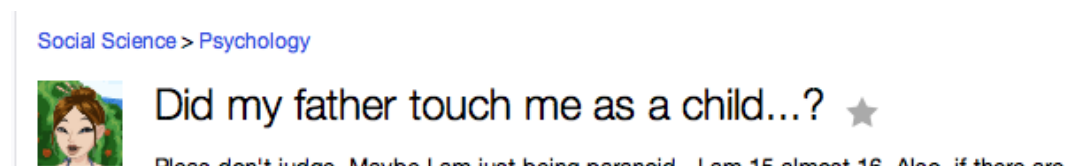
Obsession is a synonym for fixation. In human psychology, fixation refers to the state where an individual becomes obsessed with an attachment to another human, animal or inanimate object. A Freudian belief that, if during one of the psychosexual stages of development, a person did not receive appropriate gratification during a specific stage, or that a specific stage left a particularly strong impression, that person's personality would reflect that particular stage throughout their adult life. Fixation can manifest in various forms (i.e., ideas, ideologies, etc.) and also occur (see Zealotry and Fanaticism).

The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as truth instead.

- Hegel



Fantasy, linked to desire, is not simply the expression of one's own very personal inwardness; it is also constitutive in that it synthesizes our perception, thus changing and signifying it.



II. Dual role of the screen: chicken and egg

I used to send and receive emails from Samantha, a DJ living in New York. I was 14 and I think she was 26? I made up a story about how I was in the hospital for an eating disorder and she told me about her stepdad.

At the time I was living in Pennsylvania, and we had a spider problem.

One time, two wolf spiders crawled across the keyboard while I was writing to her.

We eventually lost touch.

Later I developed a real eating disorder, and became a lesbian.

Fears are reversed in a similar manner. Expose yourself to a lot of spiders, and you won't be afraid of them anymore. "Working through" leads to "exhaustion" and dissolving of the fear.

Can exposing yourself to spiders on a screen prepare you for real spiders?

III. Mirrors on Yahoo! Answers

Me:

I look different in every mirror. I want to know my real body size in particular. Taking photos helps but it's not as good as an accurate mirror. Because there is always a fixed angle and not how you see things in real life, which move around. What is the best way to hang a mirror so you know it's a real and not warped mirror (like a mirror that makes you look slightly skinnier/heavier)? Is there a type or brand of mirror quality that is proven to be more exact?

Tyler, milk chocolate on fitted cap, 2014
Zac, milk chocolate on fitted cap, 2014



“Mike A”:

In truth, some mirrors, especially ones in department stores, are made to create a slight magnification. The idea behind it was likely originally so you could see more details, rather than to make you look “fatter”. But the fashion industry being what it is, it ends up making people look and feel huge, when they really aren’t. So, coming from someone who has worked at a clothing store, I can tell you a trick to tell if the mirror is a magnification mirror or just a normal one, is simple. When looking into it, hold your shoe up. Does it look the same size? or does it look really huge? If it looks normal, you’re seeing yourself how you normally look. if the shoe looks exaggerated, you know your body will be too.

And that’s the best advice I can give.



“Mike”:

mirriors are all supposed to be ‘accurate’ to one degree, but a flat mirror will generate a different view compared to a mirror thats concave obviously.but i also notice that in the few mirrors i have in my home, i look different in each, for example, according to people i know they seem to think that i’m not attractive(how cruel people can be ah) but when i look at myself in my mirror in my living room, i truely see myself as an attractive man, whom if i was female would happily date me,can’t explain it,

but i see something that others do not.

IV. Templates

I wrote a Shakespearean sonnet.
abab cdcd efef gg.

I cry happy, looking Lindsay Lohan
Don't wake me up, up, up, up, up, up, don't
I pet my dog and stare up at the fan
Reruns, episode after episode

I want this day to end, my stomach aches
I am so alone smelling hot pockets
Whatever, there's no more comments to make
Rub my eyes to see colors, violet.

I need to stop texting you, I'm choking
I am not angry I am "exhausted"
Play Tetris on my phone without looking
I feel bad for you, you've really lost it

I thought this would work out better for me
Hehehehehehehehehehe

People are producing more “original content” than ever, of course. User-friendly websites and apps allow grandmas to make their own 3D animations.

Everyone is a photographer; everyone is a video editor; everyone is a blogger; everyone appreciates aesthetics. Lady Gaga. I really think that.

Yeah, obviously.

So, you should either be more like Nam Jun Paik, or less. Either hack the system, or don’t use it at all. Stop inserting your face in the hole. Do more than just work at a gallery desk, posing for pictures with more losers in Dubai. I despise DIS magazine, too. Wearing Crocs is not transgressive. This may come as a surprise to you. Since I’m talking about the Internet and everything here.

Becky: When is art too cool to be good?

I make cool stuff because I’m smart and talented. I can’t help it. But I digress.

If you’re lazy-cool and make selfie video art, I hate you and so does the rest of the world. They just pretend to like you because they want to fuck you, or they want to know someone who has fucked you, etc. I thought I could escape high school by becoming an artist. Don’t be fooled by my obsession/work with little girls. Adolescents are super annoying, but they are less annoying than adults who try to re-live their adolescence through their work. I can’t believe people actually like that stuff. I dance in my apartment too, but it’s not my masterpiece. It’s not my “work” exploring “body issues.”

The worst part about this is how you’re getting me to complain about it. Please. Read a book. Become more complicated. You’re not interesting. Kill yourself.

But if you’re reading this, you probably have good taste. You know what I mean about “taste.” Don’t get all “there is no such thing as good taste” on me. You “feel me.”

I’m dizzy and I can’t breathe.

MULLEAVYS: Can you tell us about Philadelphia, where you live?

KILIMNIK: I live in Montana now.

V. Tetris Effect

A phenomenon called Tetris Effect occurs when you play Tetris for so long that you still visualize elements of the game even after you stop playing. You find it everywhere, like in the grocery store aisles. You can pick out the shapes in your garage or closet. When you close your eyes, you see glowing geometry rain. You hallucinate Tetris, basically. You become a Tetris robot, running free in the world.

Tetris Effect is like sea legs. When you have sea legs, you learn to walk straight-- even on a rocky ship at sea. Then, when you get off the boat, you walk in a wavy pattern.

Tetris Effect is a useful symptom.

I stay with an image long enough to think in the same pattern as it does. I don't trust an image until I've looked at many other similar images.

Seeing one picture of a cheerleader is weird.

But when you look at pictures of cheerleaders every day, you become one of them.

"Symbols" don't really carry any meaning other than that they stick. The sticking provides me with a reference point for later, a visual bookmark to something i was thinking about at one point... And this leads me to the previous thing and also to the next thing. Images have a visual relationship from one to another because they burn themselves into the backs of my eyelids, basically.

It's like thinking in your roommate's voice. So this is how images obtain a level of "importance" in my work.

VI. Brain fog

Brain fog is both an emotion and a sense.

I might as well be a rock, just existing, autopilot with absent pilot. Lacan says that only neonatal fetuses live in the “Real” state, because they exist completely without language. This does not apply here. Language is an image here. An image is real. The soul is limitless. I have no organs. As you exist you change, need, etc. The real is real.

Muting all of your senses to sleep must make everything else more sensory. Nothing feels better than dreaming.

When I got diagnosed with Lupus, my mom sent me a bunch of articles about Celiac Disease.

My yoga teacher said, to a room full of (already) self hating exercisers, “Ninety percent of the thoughts we have in a day are the same from day to day. New thoughts are only ten percent.” Propaganda: “open up” “consciously”

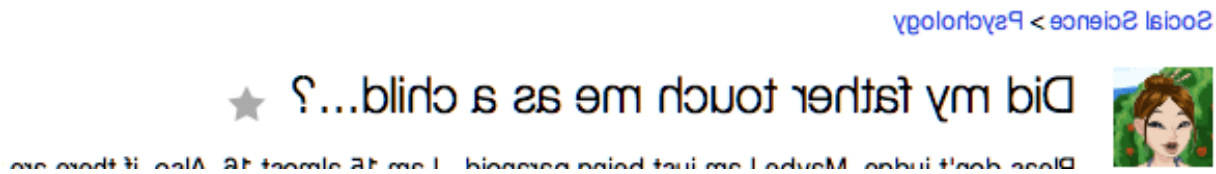
Breathe.

It’s ironic that a yoga teacher would say this, because you are supposed to be focusing on your body and nothing else when you are in yoga.

The only new thoughts I get from yoga are about yoga.

And meditation is the most complacent thing you could do with your life. If you’re doing it right, body and mind become one thoughtless, feeling-less, useless blob. I understand that this is supposed to make you more efficient at solving life problems when you’re not meditating, but I haven’t seen a difference in the world. And yoga has been popular for a while now.

Everyone deserves to be peaceful. True. But you're just as neurotic when you come home from the gym, even if it takes a couple hours for you to realize it.



For breakfast, I had a red-quinoa salad at Le Pain Quotidien, and a decaf coffee with milk. Caffeine makes me totally crazy. The amount of caffeine in decaf is enough. It gives me a little something. And I'm always cold, so I like a hot coffee, but I can't drink caffeinated coffee. It makes me really jittery. I can't think straight. Then later I had a half of a health-grain bagel from Murray's... Then I went to my friend [food stylist] Allison Attenborough's house for dinner with like ten people. I had shrimp salad with toasted coconut, pomello, lime, and palm sugar that was unbelievable. Then she made this root-vegetable stew in this kind of sweet soy braise used for beef, from some David Chang recipe, but she did it with turnips and daikon and whatever, and brown rice, and it was delicious. And for dessert, a rhubarb and berry crumble with vanilla ice cream. Fuck, I love rhubarb. It's so good. We had some rose Champagne before the meal and Riesling with the meal.

- Jennifer Rubell

It disgusts me, this “zone out” thing. Especially scary because so many stupid people do yoga.

But really, a lot of people have called my work “hypnotic.”

So I have to deal with that.

“I force myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste.”

— **Marcel Duchamp**

like

tags: **art**, creative-process, creativity

155 likes



Untitled (Girls in a Room)
Video, sound, 6:58. 2012



Defibrillators
Animation, loop. 2013

VII. I <3 festering

Before I start a new project I make an effort not to leave the house for at least a month. I like to think the same thoughts again and again. For example I like to reread all my stupid iPhone notes, look at all my old emails and text messages. This is difficult to admit, how lame I am. It's never bright enough inside, but I can't bring myself to want to go outside. My glasses feel heavy and greasy on my face. I check on old friends of mine online. I don't even care; I just want to not have any new thoughts. Stew into the past-past. I watch only movies I've seen before, etc. I watch Christine get dressed each morning. No matter how late she wakes up, I try to wake up after her. She tries on like 30 outfits a day before she decides what to wear. I put them away for her if I feel guilty for being a hermit. We have a tiny bedroom, so any mess feels like a huge mess. Sometimes I just go back to sleep, sharing the bed with the pile of her unwanted shirts.

It ends when I have a good idea, which either happens when I'm in the shower or falling asleep.

Actually that reminds me.

Salvador Dali said that he would balance a key on his arm, delicately, and sit down for a nap in his armchair.

The key would drop to the floor in the moment his body relaxed into sleep.

He would wake up, and make a painting with whatever he saw between falling asleep and being awake.

I don't want to be like him.

We hate in others what we hate in ourselves.

Think about it: is your body any different than a purse or a backpack carrying personal belongings? Old receipts stick around until they get thrown out. Things fill up space until they don't anymore. I forgot I got new Chapstick. Ibuprofen spilled everywhere. A note from my brother that I can't look at or get rid of; both options are sad. A book I liked so much at the library that I bought it. Maybe I'm more repressed than other people, more escapist and avoidant. Maybe I should get a therapist. Who cares about me though. This isn't about me, and it's not about banality, even.

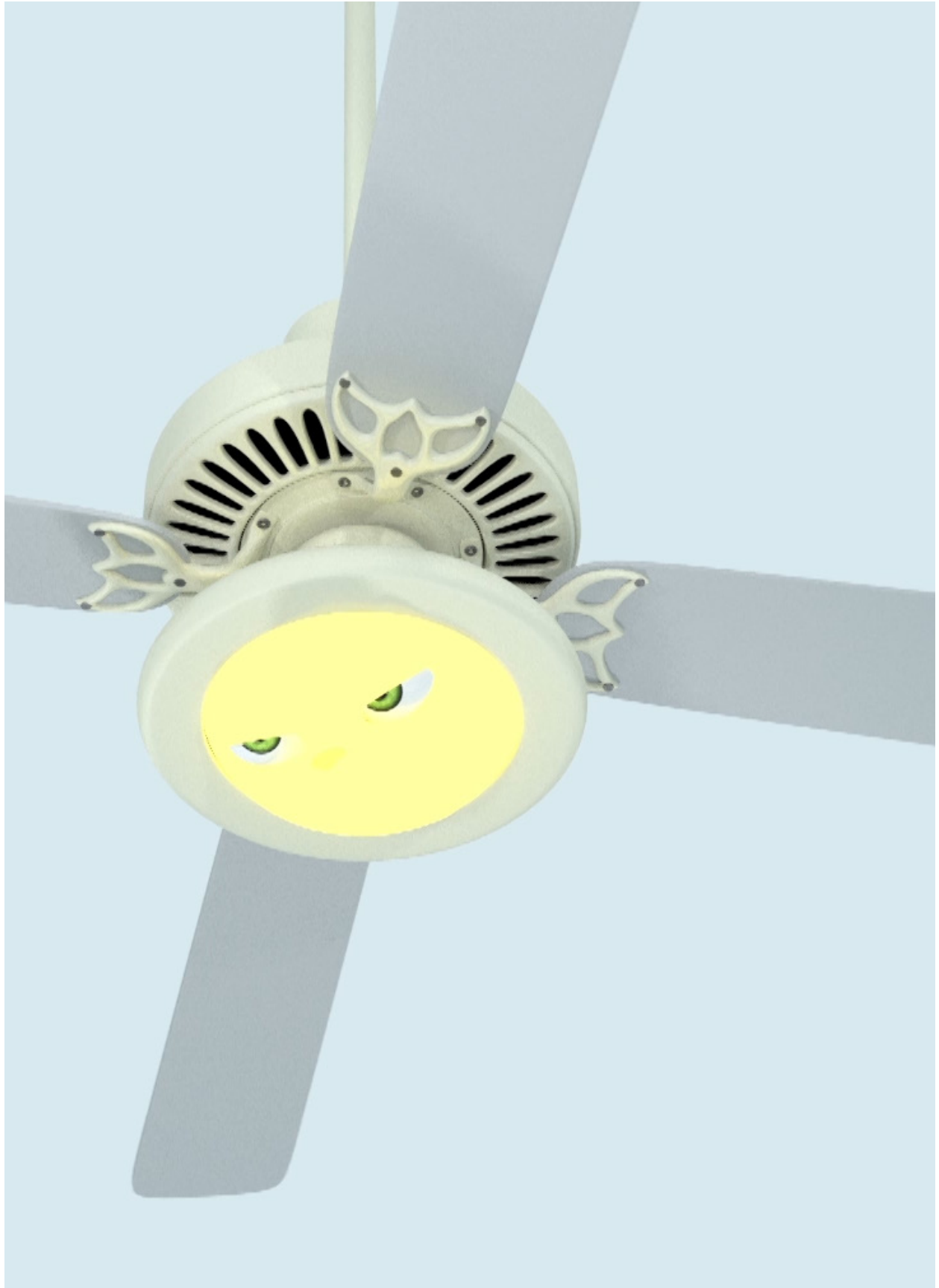
I really meant to say that some things stick and then they don't. Everything is transient. Everything is everything. When it's happening. And then it carries over, inevitably.



Four Seasons
HD Animation, sound.
5:40 (loop)
2014



Installation view



Transcript from video:

Trust involves the juxtaposition of people's loftiest hopes and aspirations with their deepest worries and fears. This is why so many people have trouble trusting: for them, the benefits of closeness and intimacy are overshadowed by the possibility of pain and betrayal.

If you have trouble trusting people, it may be helpful for you to focus on what you're bringing to the party. Do a triangle gaze. Look at 1 eye, and then move to the other eye and down to the lips. This will draw focus to the lips. Bring your lower lip in very slightly.

Bite tenderly on 1 side of the inner lip for 2 to 5 seconds. Same with the shapes, who cares if they are shaped like pork chops, chicken wings, stars, or are just little bits and pieces, have you ever known a dog to refuse a good people meat like chicken if we shaped it like a arrow? Or an egg shaped meatloaf, would the dog like it any less really? It took me a while, but eventually I figured out that when my wife is angry about something, she wants me to become angry with her. That's the best way, I've discovered, that I can validate what she's feeling, which is what most of us want most of the time when we're feeling something strongly.

Nothing lasts forever.

The mystique of a girl you've yet to fuck is gone once you've fucked her.

The incredible feeling of shooting heroin you'll never experience again after that first time. Your love for your girlfriend or wife, fades with time.

This too shall pass.

It is tempting to take a lot, because although it is effective at lower doses, you might take 20mg and say 'oh, that was a productive day', you feel it at higher doses. You might take 80mg and be like 'Oh, yeah, I feel that. Definitely working', but at such a high dose, your actions are going to be weirder.

What you have there is a bad habit.

So learn a new habit. Take acting classes. Gifts are always nice. And you could stop doing whatever it is you're doing that requires an apology.

The last thing I need to tell you is simply don't try too hard when looking for inspiration, just let it come to you. When people try too hard to look for inspiration it seems to run away from them, or the idea itself becomes jumbled.

Inspiration is linked to emotion so the next time you are feeling a little emotional let all your feelings out on your work. And love is a decision, not a feeling. Love is giving. The measure of love is self-sacrifice. The measure of love is to love without measure.

The day has 1440 minutes, and sex is only 10 or 15.

I never seem to have difficulty crying when I want and or need to and even sometimes when I don't. However, I do think the sad song and movie suggestions are a good place to start. I hope you figure something out and are able to cry. I don't what I would do if I couldn't cry and get things out. Hope you are able to. In the meantime, I am crying enough for both of us right now.

Vita

Morgan Pearce
Born 1989 in Princeton, NJ

BFA Fine Arts, School of Visual Arts, 2011
MFA Sculpture + Extended Media, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014