

Quicksand

While being in an exhibition space for too long, I often experience a slight feeling of unease. Somehow these blank spaces are designed to eliminate all awareness of the outside world. An outside that I myself am part of. The *spaces* agency is commonly described as fading into the background, toning it down, lessening the impact and retracting into the white, in order to create a place of untroubled neutrality. A neutrality that seems to be host to all other signifiers in the room. Or so they say. The *desert* often serves as a semantic playing-field for similar reasons. A site traditionally standing for emptiness, stillness, death, temptation, as well as the search for origin, purity and reformation. In fertile landscapes that allow actions to take place or narratives to unfold. In the past these sites have elicited the desire to mark, to connect, to chart, to bomb, to nest, to hide, to occupy and to leave behind. There's an archetype who inhabits these places. Sun-kissed, chewing on a toothpick, high-crowned, wide-brimmed hat, a loner who lives in a world full of simplification and self-interest. It's a deep-rooted image. An Idiot Image. Lately I've been thinking of the *desert* as a substructure that doesn't encourage narrative readability and straightforwardness. But rather zooms in and out of focus. That suggests a more fuzzy realm of passive uncertainty. Physical materials that push down and under. Gravity pulling them towards each other in order to detach again. *Sunk into its depths.*

I've been imagining a certain cinematic sequence. It starts with a close-up of a mouth toying with a toothpick, slowly but gradually withdrawing, revealing a face, then the entire body. With changes in scale, responses slide from the particular to the general. The aerial shot zooms out even more, as the figure becomes more distant. I see a bland, sandy landscape, a geographical region, a topographic surface, slowly zooming out as earth becomes a horizon, a glistening sphere, a shining ball, a grain of sand.

I think I might be getting off the point. In any case, somewhere or other I read about dung beetles using celestial compass cues such as the sun or the moon, and the pattern of polarized light formed around these reflective sources to roll their dung balls along straight paths. That changes things. I feel even more disoriented now. *Gravitate towards.*

1. *Night Gloomer*, 2021

Beech wood, brass, tin, acrylic glass, concrete

2. *Good Planets Are Hard to Find*, 2021

Concrete, quartz sand, entomology dung beetles, aluminum, tin, chrome steel

3. *Even though there aren't any stars out tonight, you're still shining like*

one, 2021 Beech wood, brass, tin, acrylic glass, concrete

4. *Robert's First Draft*, 2021

Fiberglass, air-dry clay, quartz sand, PLA print

5. *Idiot Image*, 2021

Fiberglass, air-dry clay, quartz sand, aluminum

6. *Dad's Stomach Ulcer*, 2021

Beech wood, brass, tin, acrylic glass, concrete

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Quicksand, Samuel Linus Gromann, 2021