

AMBER KEMPTHORN

A River Isn't Too Much To Love

About the Artist

Amber Kempthorn received an MFA in Sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI (2008); a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD (2006); and a BA from Hiram College, Hiram, OH (2000).

Her selected exhibitions include those at: The Bonfoey Gallery, Cleveland OH, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH, and The Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH (all in 2016); Zygote Press, Cleveland, OH (2015 and 2014); Miller Yezerki Gallery, Boston, MA, 1point618, Cleveland, OH, and the Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL (all in 2014); 8th Street Gallery, Boston, MA (2010); and Aqua Art Fair, Art Basel Miami Beach, Miller Block Gallery, Boston, MA (2009).

Selected awards include a *Seven Below Artist Residency* in Westward, VT (2013), and participation in MOCA Cleveland's Nesnadny & Schwartz Visiting Curator's Program (2009). Kempthorn has taught at The College of Wooster and The Cleveland Institute of Art as an adjunct professor since 2012. The artist lives and works in Hiram, OH.

In her 1979 book *The White Album*, Joan Didion writes, “We tell ourselves stories in order to live.” Didion is describing our very human need to document our lives, and how sharing and hearing stories assuage the burden of the existential nature of everyday experience. I consider myself a visual storyteller who thoughtfully reflects on the minutiae and melancholy of life through drawing.

Primarily composites, these works on paper begin with a liberal application of spray paint to create an atmospheric base that is then layered with drawing, airbrushing, stenciling, painting, and collage using a variety of mediums. Each work contains a series of vignettes that coalesce into passages imparting a larger story.

The narrative stems from a personal visual vocabulary and the repetition of landscape elements such as the moon, mountains, sea, and sky. The representation of sea and sky reflects my interest in liminality or the space between, and the manner in which our thoughts and memories transition to and from one another. Because memory itself creates a strange hierarchy, the arrangement of space and the primary and attendant imagery in each drawing follows the rules of that hierarchy. The way we remember some things over others is not logical; it is mysterious.

Culled from mental scraps of actual events, memories, observations, books, stories, and songs, my work invites the viewer to consider our shifting relationship to history, culture, and the environment. They raise questions about both the persistence of holding onto certain memories in the face of so much impermanence, and our changing perception of an American mythology.

Amber Kempthorn, Adjunct Professor
Department of Art and Art History, The College of Wooster