

# Doug McGlumphy **monumental**

The College of Wooster Art Museum  
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While renovating his family farm in Tuscarawas County, OH, Doug McGlumphy traveled rural roads for over two decades to teach and work at The College of Wooster, Kenyon College, and Washington & Jefferson College. On the farm and through these trips, he engaged with the authentic material culture of rural America, which he transforms into witty and compelling critiques of modern American values, beliefs, and social structures.

Real materials convey truths, which in McGlumphy's hands, transcend appearances with humor and double meanings. The side of a barn with weatherworn and fragmentary chewing tobacco advertisements and packing boxes with patriotic imagery echo familiar slogans and facile political catchphrases. Old windows and wood boxes rise as monuments, highlighting entrenched social, political, and economic hierarchies. The artist crowds the gallery with these materials in much the same way the national discourse now invades daily life.

The tension between the progressive and the conservative in American life also animates this work through the metaphors of travel and stasis. Fruit crates, palettes, and tobacco move from rural America to urban and international markets, but this commerce is only possible with the help of migrant labor now routinely vilified in the media. The inherent irony, of course, is that most Americans have a migrant background. Vertical nesting chicken boxes and repurposed old windows underscore the static nature of power and challenge the myth of widespread social mobility in America.

Unlike public monuments and political slogans that mythologize, McGlumphy's *monumental* demystifies easy beliefs and underscores paradoxes embedded in the American experience.

–John P. Lambertson, Professor and Edith M. Kelso  
Chair of Art History, Washington & Jefferson College

## **Acknowledgments**

Because the CWAM staff works so closely with students, we believe that it is important they experience the scholarship and art produced by CWAM staff in much the same way that adjunct faculty and faculty artists exhibit their work in the CWAM. Both John Lambertson and I have had the pleasure of working with Doug for many years, and I thank John for contributing the introductory text above. Most of all, however, I thank Doug not only for his dedication to teaching and his many years supporting other artists by making their work look amazing in the CWAM galleries but also for the incisive and timely commentary he shares in *monumental*.

–Kitty McManus Zurko, Director/Curator  
The College of Wooster Art Museum

## **About the Artist**

Doug McGlumphy received a BA in Art Education from Washington & Jefferson College, and an MFA in Painting and Ceramics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In addition to running the Hisrich Hills House B&B and ArtFarm with his wife Jennifer Greer, he has been the Director of the Olin Art Gallery at Washington & Jefferson College—where he is also an Instructor of Art—since 2007. McGlumphy has been the Preparator/Collections Manager at the CWAM since, 1999, and has also worked at the Olin Gallery at Kenyon College. Selected solo exhibitions include those at the Kipp Gallery, Indiana, PA (2018), the Weston Art Gallery, Cincinnati, OH (2018), and the Pomerene Center for the Arts, Coshocton, OH (2006).

## Label Texts

### **Broad (side), 2018**

Wood, paint, tobacco, deer antlers  
Courtesy of the artist

The degree of political fervor the artist saw while traveling rural back roads during the 2016 presidential election inform both *Broad (side)* and *Migrant*.

Never one to shy away from puns and well-worn sayings, McGlumphy's *Broad (side)* is a double entendre tour de force. Definitions of broadside include a warship's cannon fire, a political proclamation, and the long side of a barn—the latter giving rise to the saying "You can't hit the broad side of a barn!" Here, the long side bears multiple iterations of chewing tobacco advertisements intended for travelers on Highway 21, one of the first paved roads in Tuscarawas County. The remnant of a mounted deer head metaphorically aims at the viewer through the opening in the barn siding.

Behind the siding, tobacco leaves hang drying on racks. McGlumphy commented that when he purchased the tobacco in southern Ohio, the farmers' migrant workers were taking a break. As he knows from his community, such workers often occupy a parallel social environment that does not necessarily intersect with mainstream communities.

Cumulatively, *Broad (side)* becomes a gigantic "proclamation" targeting conformity and hypocrisy by highlighting the contradiction of relying on inexpensive labor while at the same time decrying illegal immigration.

–KMZ

### **Inner Beauty, 2016**

Wood  
Courtesy of the artist

One's "inner beauty" is usually ascribed to positive qualities not immediately apparent upon first glance. McGlumphy reverses this concept by embedding the ostensible beauty of an always public-facing "fancy" Victorian-era front porch post

within a barn windlass—a highly useful and typically hidden mechanism indispensable to lifting materials into haylofts.

This work asks essential questions about taking things at face value. For example, do the decorative turnings on the front porch post have any other function beyond signifying status? And what types of knowledges become privileged? If anything has enabled civilizations to thrive it is the simplicity of the gearing ratios of the windlass (think medieval castles and cathedrals).

–KMZ

**Migrant, 2017**

Wood, paint, metal, paper

Courtesy of the artist

*Migrant* was conceived shortly after the pardoning of Joe Arpaio—an Arizona sheriff known for aggressively rounding up undocumented workers and putting them in detention camps under less than humane conditions.

In this work, McGlumphy speaks to slogans such as “ship them back to where they came from” and “secure our borders!” Comprised of a shipping pallet piled high with upended fruit and vegetable boxes, produce baskets, and chicken and egg crates, *Migrant* asks us to consider what would happen if all migrant workers in America were deported? Who would pick the fruit and slaughter the chickens? Within this context, the patriotic imagery of the Liberty Bell and Uncle Sam’s hat on the packing box labels become poignant reminders of the ideal of the American ethos of liberty for all—or not.

–KMZ

**Glass Ceiling, 2016**

Wood, glass

Courtesy of the artist

*Glass Ceiling* embodies the wordplay, and incisive socio-political commentary found throughout McGlumphy’s work. Inspired by a video of shattering glass that ran after Hillary Clinton’s 2016 Democratic National Convention acceptance speech, *Glass*

*Ceiling* stems from this specific “monumental” moment in American history when the first woman might have become president.

Evocative of defunct factories with their broken and dirty windows as well as front yard decorations made from old window sashes, *Glass Ceiling’s* extreme verticality implies ascendancy. However, there is no floor to stand on or stairs to climb, making the ceiling always out of reach. One can see what is on the other side of the glass ceiling, but it is not possible to move past the barrier.

Although McGlumphy was thinking about the familiar feminist construct of the glass ceiling—a term first coined in the late-1970s—in this work he also suggests that such unofficially acknowledged and often imperceptible impediments apply to anyone hindered by racial assumptions, lack of access to education and health care, and other gender and socio-economic discrimination.

–KMZ

**Pecking Order, 2016**

Wood, straw, egg, and metal

Courtesy of the artist

An obelisk in form, *Pecking Order* takes its meaning from how chickens peck each other to determine dominance.

Stacked vertically instead of in the more typical horizontal chicken roost orientation, each box in *Pecking Order* becomes incrementally smaller toward the apex where the brown egg resides. From the artist’s perspective, 99% of the boxes in this work are a metaphor for the American populace that supports the top 1% or, in this case, the egg. The precariousness of the stacked and unsecured boxes also suggests a game of Jenga where the tower topples when supporting pieces—or those lower on the pecking order—are removed.

–KMZ

**Bandwagon**, 2019

Wood, cloth, paint

Courtesy of the artist

Two wood wagon tongues with their original paint—one red, one blue—stand atop patriotic bunting and American eagles. The title of this work says it all.

–KMZ

**Shelved**, 2019 (*right*)

Cardboard, metal

Courtesy of the artist

**Forefathers**, 2019 (*far right*)

Wood, paint, metal, light bulbs

Courtesy of the artist

Both of these works deal with the questionable practice of historical negation. *Shelved*—comprised of old, empty storage boxes that once housed the CWAM’s John Taylor Arms Print Collection—speaks to the “shelving” or relegation of traditional 20th-century artists to the dustbin of the passé. *Forefathers* feature frames where similarly negative spaces consider the backlash of identity politics.

–KMZ