

THE CRACK IN THE TEA-CUP: *An Impossible Correspondence*

ARTIST STATEMENT



KRISTIN SERAFINI

2014 Graduate Thesis
Vermont College of Fine Arts
MFA in Visual Arts

RECENTLY COLLECTED BY YALE UNIVERSITY, the Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection at the SAIC, and the ACA Library of SCAD Atlanta, *The Crack in the Tea-Cup: An Impossible Correspondence* is an open edition 66 page hardback book containing letters and postcards I wrote to a close friend after his passing. Inspired by Nick Bantock's *Griffin & Sabine* series, tipped-in envelopes contain removable cards and letters. This friend, whom I had known for 25 years, had passed without coming out to me. Since we were both teaching at a private college in the United States that did not knowingly hire or admit openly LGBT faculty or students, I was forced to confront the question of how much I had contributed to Dr. Booth's continuing silence. This correspondence searches through queer theory, academic politics, and personal history in an effort to register the cost of the closet and the accountability of allies.

The book's form takes a queer approach to the conceal/reveal, in/out binary. While Bantock's postage stamps allude, separately, to countries that either do or do not exist, mine use coded images to commemorate hidden emotional territory within a recognized superpower. Similarly, when the book is open, the letters are still hidden, allowing the reader to decide whether to remove a letter from its envelope to examine it, and whether or not to put it back. The overstuffed binding hints at how the suppression of content breaks a chosen form.

On 18 November 2014, the Board of Trustees announced that, effective immediately, Principia College will end the policy of discrimination against LGBT students and faculty. None of us expected this good news to come so soon! I have designed a bonus postcard to add to the book which reflects this change... so now it has a happier ending.



The Crack in the Tea-Cup

MFA Graduate Thesis (Process Paper)

Showing Overfull Binding Signifying Unsustainable Secretkeeping

Kristin Serafini • Jan–July 2014 • 7" x 7" x 1.5"

66 Page Hardback Book With Tipped-In Removable Letters

Designed with Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign

DEAR MICHAEL ~

'Welcome' from the Plain Sight Project
Kristin Serafini, 2013


09 May 2013

A month ago I joined the student-led sit-in protesting the anti-gay policy at Principia College. After having a talk with myself about signing the online petition (and whether it would get me fired), it came to this:

A) HAVING TO ASK IF YOU'RE FREE TO SPEAK
MEANS YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT.

B) IN CASE THERE IS AN AFTERLIFE,
I WANT TO BE ABLE TO LOOK YOU
IN THE EYE & KNOW I DID THE RIGHT THING.

DR. MICHAEL G. BOOTH
THICK O' THE WOODS
% THE AFTERLIFE

I signed @ the sit-in today, where a student (who knew I was faculty & could turn her in) leaned over & said, "YOU KNOW WHAT REALLY SUCKS, KRISTIN? I HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE A STRAIGHT ALLY TO HAVE A VOICE ON THIS ISSUE." The bottom fell out of my stomach. WE'RE NOT EVEN ASKING LGBT STUDENTS (+ FACULTY) WHAT THEIR EXPERIENCES ARE LIKE. What does it mean to 'Choose' to go to college closeted? I wish I had thought to ask you. Your silence was so perfect, I couldn't even see it was there. This was the beginning of the PLAIN SIGHT PROJECT: my 3rd semester installation which included 8 audio diaries recorded by LGBT alumni + current students...  K

The Crack in the Tea-Cup

MFA Graduate Thesis (Process Paper) Excerpt, Page 08

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'Fountain of Youth' photo from *The Plain Sight Project*
Kristin Serafini • July 2013



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MFA Graduate Thesis (Process Paper) Excerpt, Page 21

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Fantasy | Reality

Illustration from Graduate Thesis

Kristin Serafini • April 2014

Adobe Photoshop



Vast Realities

Illustration from Graduate Thesis

Kristin Serafini • April 2014

Adobe Photoshop



The Triumph of Halftone and Saturation

Illustration from Graduate Thesis

Kristin Serafini • June 2014

Adobe Photoshop



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