

STATEMENT for THE BAILOUT BIENNIAL
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When the Roanoke settlers, who were of European descent, said to hell with Sir Walter Raleigh and the plutocrats and ran off to join the Croatan Indians, they were not merely "going native." In essence, they were challenging the newly constructed boundaries between wilderness and civilization, and, in so doing, were rocking the freshly laid colonial foundations of North America.

Ron Sakolsky, Preface to Gone to Croatoan

Gone Fishin', Gone Croatoan consists of a cane pole propped upright against the gallery wall, with a found scrap of white linen bearing the word CROATOAN, tied to the pole like a flag of surrender. This word is embroidered in dried pine needles, and is legible in the folds of the flag.

This flag is a symbol of surrender, in the spirit of 'dropout culture' and the New World colonists who traveled from Elizabethan England to the coast of present-day North Carolina in 1587, only to have disappeared three years later when their party's leader, John White, returned to North Carolina from England in 1590 to deliver supplies.

The pine needle text is in the same style that the letters were originally carved into a tree on Roanoke Island, spelling out CROATOAN, as discovered by John White upon his return from England. Several likely theories about the meaning of this message encompass the possibility that the English colonists went to the Croatan peoples, a tribe of Native Americans that lived on the current-day Outer Banks and inner sound islands of North Carolina. Subsequently, and of interest to this story, the phrase "gone to croatoan" has become a phrase used by proponents of anti-capitalism and subculture activism.

In a purposeful removal of oneself from the mainstream, *Gone Fishin', Gone Croatoan* is a gesture towards leave-taking, a signal from the people that the post-colonial and post-capitalist phase of America is faltering – and we want out!

Untitled Magazine and Plates Series

Our generation arrived after the utopia had been accomplished, after the cooling off of the nuclear explosion. Radioactive fallout has descended, and we have

rediscovered ourselves in a post-utopian world. It is our task to describe the state of mankind, of the world and of our own psyche in this post-utopian world.
--Ilya Kabakov

I am interested in the intersection of contemporary global reality with an often idealized American past. I am particularly interested in the concept of decorative patterns as visual 'background noise;' as something we see all the time but rarely comment upon. I find inspiration in the form and function of Russian Revolutionary propaganda and colonial American decorative patterns, which historically have featured wars and political happenings and served as a record of contemporary lifestyles.

In the *Untitled Communist Plate Series*, I selected plate designs from the Target.com website that referenced any sort of ethnic or regional tradition, and rendered them faithfully in gouache on the cheap, disposable paper plates common to picnics and American throw-away culture in general. I combined these decorative designs with slogans from Communist Russian propaganda, rendered in gilt script on the reverse of the plates. The *Untitled Capitalist Plate Series* is the analogous verso of the aforementioned series. These plates feature images culled from Communist Russian propaganda posters and books covers. The featured slogans are from anonymous workers' blogs, and some of the more recognizable ones are colloquial American sayings referencing the tensions between labor, leisure, and activism.

The purpose of this investigation is two-fold: to reproduce, in hand-made form, an object that could attest to the presence of empty American cultural moments. I am appropriating slogans, turning them over, and looking for crossovers, contradictions and collusions. I wanted to highlight and centralize the ahistorical currents running through American consumerism. Secondly, by hand-painting these objects and rendering them in a precious way, I make issues of craft a benevolent force, slowing capitalist time through the reproduction of a mass-produced item in handmade form.

Another series that appears in Bail Out Biennial is the remixing of book and magazine covers from 1920's Russia, made into silkscreened and hand painted magazine- and pamphlet-like objects, binding paper made from the pulp of Hustler and Playboy magazines. I selected provocative covers that Alexander Rodchenko originally designed, mostly images of rural identity juxtaposed with slogans purporting to Soviet ideals of work and industrial progress. I used my own photographs to re-contextualize and complicate the original propaganda. A close-up photograph of wood grain bears the title "U.S.A. UNDER CONSTRUCTION." An image of the downtown Pittsburgh Paint and Glass building looms over an image of a typical suburban home; the other, a self-portrait like that of Osip Brik's on the cover of LEF magazine, replaces the ubiquitous '.com' of our contemporary experience.

I believe that art can disrupt order and provide new models for the individual and society. As Bruce Nauman once said, "Art is a means of acquiring an investigative attitude."