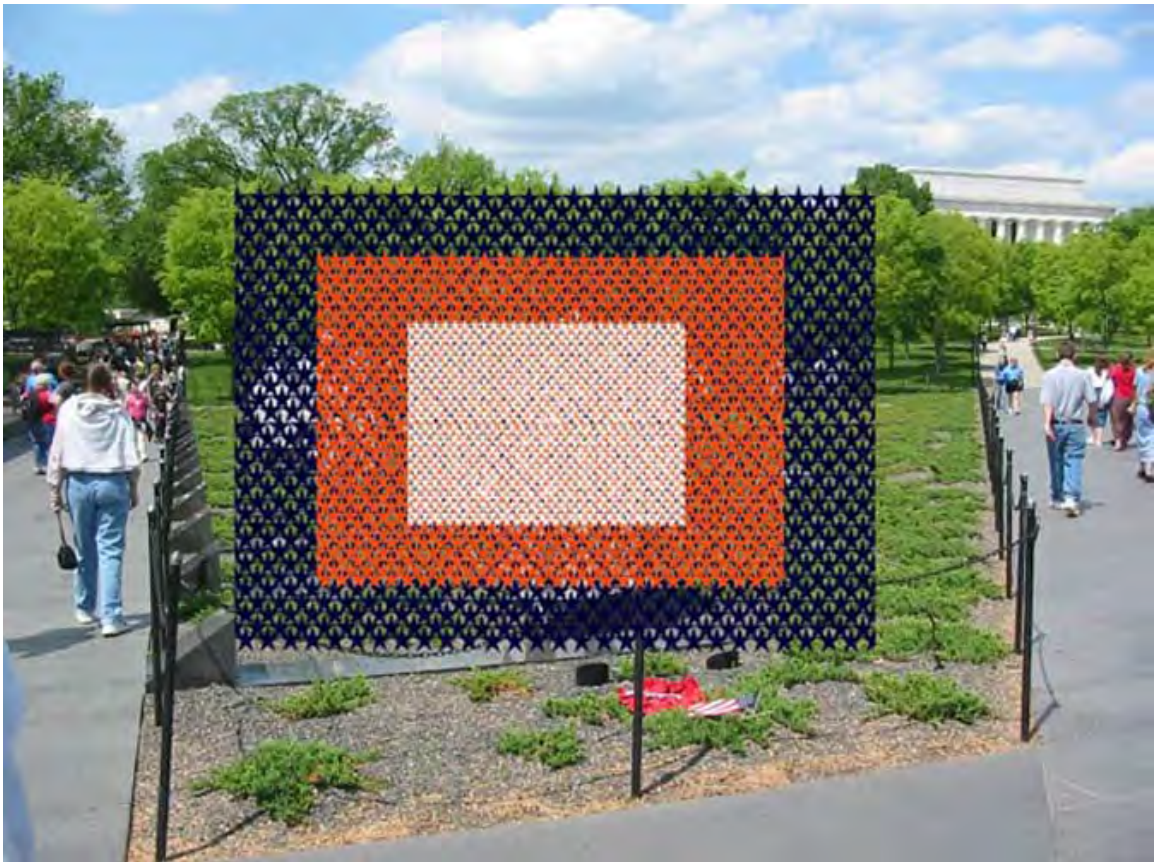


DAILY SERVING

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By Rebekah Drysdale

Marc Blumthal



Marc Blumthal, Stars Within Stars Within Stars, serigraph on inkjet print, 2010

Marc Blumthal's work is an investigation of individual and collective identity. His images, which reference the artist's personal experiences as well as America's history, address the nature of being human and the pressures of the past. Blumthal's continuing series, *Diary of An American*, includes several images of American public monuments and memorials, which the artist has modified with a screen-print overlay. Often, the overlay is abstract, and obstructs or obliterates a significant portion of the original photograph, prompting the viewer to question the broader cultural arrangements that shape our lives. On *Saatchi's online gallery*, Blumthal bluntly states, "I'm inspired by shame and guilt. My interests lie in Identity...[my] work addresses my personal identity and my national identity." As part of his series *My Father Had a Vasectomy*, Blumthal combined several

photographs in a digital collage to create *Neighbours* (2009-2010). The background images in *Neighbours* are found images of the four border states, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, which are rhythmically juxtaposed to form four photographic rows resembling film strips, each containing multiple images (see below). The strength of the piece lies in its powerful composition and its legion of cultural, political, and art historical references, both past and present. The artist states, "I began questioning my whole belief system and felt terrible to call myself an American, because of our dark history, manifest destiny, and the list goes on; there's too much to be pissed off about, and when you finally open your eyes, it's like you caught your partner cheating on you."



Marc Blumthal, *Neighbours*, Archival inkjet Print, 2010

The title of the work itself refers to the 1952 short film by Norman McLaren, *Neighbours*, which was inspired by the director's anti-war sentiments towards the Korean War. Across the background images in Blumthal's *Neighbours*, which all "point to a boundary and the lines between two people, nations," the artist powerfully repeats Robert Indiana's *Love* sculpture. One of the most ubiquitous works of twentieth century art, *Love* was created in 1966 while America was in the midst of the Vietnam War. The proliferation of this iconic work, both with and without the artist's approval, is due to its lack of copyright. Blumthal selected the *Love* sculpture because he felt that it "hypocritically reflects everything our nation represents." Mr. Indiana's iconic letters fuse to form a wall that weaves in and out of multiple frames, traversing various land and seascapes of America. The power of this word and work mirrors the erratic nature of the sentiment itself, from the sincere, to the deeply superficial. In an era when various political leaders loudly profess their beliefs, Mr. Blumthal's work subtly yet effectively sheds light on the shameful hypocrisy that is created when one's actions are the antithesis of the "love" they preach.



Marc Blumthal, Missing the Majesty, Archival Pigment Print, 2010

The artist received his M.F.A. in Painting from the University of Pennsylvania in 2010. He has recently exhibited work at the International Print Center of New York and Leonard Pearlstein Gallery in Philadelphia. His M.F.A. Thesis exhibition was held at the Ice Box Project Space in Philadelphia.