

Aridtopia

Essays on Art & Culture from Deserts
in the Southwest United States

Tyler Stallings

BLUE WEST BOOKS

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Blue West Books
Riverside, California

Copyright © 2014, Tyler Stallings
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
First edition, 2014
Front and back cover photos by Tyler Stallings
Cover design by Ben Hatheway

ISBN: 978-0-9859495-3-2
LCCN: 2013953055

Blue West Books is a publishing collective dedicated to promoting emerging and established authors of contemporary fiction, poetry, and essays in California and the Southwest.

www.BlueWestBooks.com

Introduction	1
Part I: Desert Secessions	
Secession in the Desert: How Walking through a Mock Iraqi City Led to Aridtopia	7
Aridtopia's Loop Writing: A Desert Language	17
Concrete Islands Along California Freeways Jump-Start a New Society	25
Repurposing the Los Angeles Aqueduct as a Pathway for Sacred Pilgrimages	31
Part II: Desert Sounds	
An Iron Worm Whistles In My Mind	57
Considering the Sound of an Air Conditioner while Perusing <i>John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures</i>	67
Area 51: A Sound Installation by Venzha Christ	81
Part III: Desert Architectonics	
Pump Up the Realism: Todd Brainard's Paintings	89
Laurie Brown: Recent Terrains	95
Cabins in the Desert: Ruminating on Kim Stringfellow's Exploration of Jackrabbit Homesteads	101
From Beefcake to Skatecake: Shifting Depictions of Masculinity and the Backyard Swimming Pool in Southern California	109
Part IV: Desert Planets	
Free Enterprise: The Art of Citizen Space Exploration	135
Manifest Destination in <i>Spaceport America</i> by Connie Samaras	147
Miguel Palma: An Artistic Exploration of the Sonoran Desert by a Human Alien	153

A Reconsideration of Fourth of July Fireworks and Independence Day in Light of Cai Guo-Qiang's <i>Sky Ladder</i>	161
Presence Machines: Philip K. Dick's Roman Empire and <i>The Imaginary 20th Century</i>	167
Part V: Desert Mythos	
Levitating the Archaic Mind with Michael Heizer's <i>Levitated Mass</i>	175
The Idyll-Beast: A Wild Child Imaginary in Idyllwild, California	185
Lewis deSoto & Erin Neff: <i>Tahquitz</i>	193
Resurrection Machines of Ancient Egypt in San Bernardino and of Ancient Cinema in Hollywood	201
An Inland Empire Afterlife: The Immortality Project, Cryonics, and a 26-Foot Tall Marilyn Monroe	211
Hell's Union: Motorcycle Club Cuts as American Folk Art	223
Visiting with China's Ancient Terra Cotta Warriors, or Combat-Ready for Paradise	237
Acknowledgments & Illustrations	243
Index	251

Introduction

Aridtopia is a state of mind. It is a viewpoint that comes from having thoughts in an arid region. It understands that water is gold. It understands that the desert is a setting for so much that co-exists: survivalists, military bases, legacies of Native American and settler conflicts, water wars, love for open vistas, and full of people who go there to experience the desert's spaciousness in order to reconnect to the vast, cosmic spaciousness beyond this planet.

The spaciousness between vegetation, mountains, and even people allows room for the mind, soul, and spirit to wonder. For centuries, spiritual seekers have gone into the desert. The openness allows for secrecy too. Doomsayers will some times set up their fortresses there, while the military will establish secret operations too.

Since arriving at University of California, Riverside seven years ago, I've had an opportunity to explore the nearby Mojave, Sonoran, and Colorado Deserts. While a magnet for creative types since the 1960s, a plethora of artists and musicians have been moving to Joshua Tree since the 1990s. Some want the opportunity to own a piece of land and spread out, while others view desert solitude and self-sufficiency as beneficial to their artistic practice.

My inspiration for engaging with the desert began when the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA) Desert Studies was launched in 2009 by UC Santa Barbara

2 Tyler Stallings

professor Dick Hebdige in association with UC Riverside's Palm Desert Graduate Center as a UCIRA demonstration project exemplifying the Institute's then new commitment to a Social Ecologies, California-centric embedded arts research program. He had also consulted with Bruce Ferguson at Arizona State University who started an artist-based Desert Initiative program. Their idea, and it is a concept that has remained with me, was to view the world differently through an artistic lens and from the perspective of its numerous deserts, rather than its oceans, forests, or jungles.

However, amidst the nation's economic downturn in 2008, both universities made cuts, which affected both programs. After a year and a half of programming at the UCR Palm Desert campus, Hebdige returned to UC Santa Barbara, while Ferguson went to teach at the American University in Cairo; but the Desert Initiative program at ASU has continued in a different form. Greg Esser now directs it.

He, along with artists Andrea Polli and Kim Stringfellow, are co-editors for *Arid Journal*, which has been the main site where I've developed my thought experiment that I call Aridtopia, a speculative, secessionist community set in the southwest United States. The concept for this environmentally sustainable community in an arid region was inspired by Ernest Callenbach's 1975 novel, *Ectotopia*. That story's setting is the secession of Washington, Oregon, and northern California from the U.S. in order to create what he called a "steady-state" society, a precursor to "sustainability."

Simultaneous to my entries in *Arid Journal*, I was invited by

KCET-TV's *Artbound* program to write a column covering arts and culture in the Inland Empire, a moniker that encompasses cities north of Los Angeles, ranging from Pomona to Riverside to Palm Springs. From the onset, I knew that I wanted to write pieces that would eventually form the majority of the ones found in this collection. Here, I had the latitude to be experimental in my writing style and to do what I love, which is to mash up popular culture, academic discourse, and speculative ideas about society.

The essays under the first section, "Desert Secession," explore Aridtopia directly. The succeeding essays carries an Aridtopian spirit of reframing what one may find in the desert. Since Aridtopia is a secessionist community, it develops its new society, in part, by repurposing what was left behind within its territory. I envision a vibrant sense of innovation, self-sufficiency, and the zeal of starting anew. In general, I do not despair about the state of today's cultural life in these essays. Rather, I wear utopian glasses. For me, there is an opportunity in deserts to find a way to salvage the detritus of society, in order to make a better vision of life, whether for oneself, or across what may one day be a newly established border in the southwest United States for a new society called *Aridtopia*. □

Part I

Desert Secessions



Secession in the Desert: How Walking through a Mock Iraqi City Led to Aridtopia

(2012)

In October of 2009, I had the opportunity to take a tour of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California in the Mojave Desert.¹ It was part of a UC-wide project called *Mapping the Desert/Deserting the Map: An Interdisciplinary Response*. I co-organized it with Dick Hebdige from University of California, Santa Barbara, who had hoped to start an artist-based research studies program at UC Riverside's Palm Desert campus². However, the ensuing California budget crisis thwarted the plans. Nonetheless, the Marine mock city has continued to occupy my thoughts in the years that have followed the experience.

Built with shipping containers—the ones that we see on freighters docking in San Pedro or on trains taking those same containers and their goods out on the rail lines that feed the other states--the mock city that I saw was meant to mirror a typical Iraqi one at the time, since we were then at war with that country. Now, I assume that the mock city has since been rearranged, like Lego

¹ Watson, Julie, "\$170 million mock city rises at Marine base," MSNBC News, January 26, 2011. Accessed on May 30, 2012, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41258569/ns/us_news-life/t/million-mock-city-rises-marine-base/#.T87Jd01uHzl

² "Mapping the Desert" was co-organized by Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside, and University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA), which was co-directed by Dick Hebdige at the time. The related website documents all phases of this project and prior ones for arts-based desert research initiated by Hebdige, <http://www.sweeney.ucr.edu/exhibitions/mappingthedesert/>.

8 Tyler Stallings

blocks, to suggest an Afghan one, or perhaps an Egyptian one, maybe even one in Syria. Whatever the city, I assume that it's one in the Arabian or Syrian Deserts.

Our guide said, "Future wars will be fought in cities." His example for other cities was not an Arabian one however. Instead, he said, "We could stack these containers to seem like a city block in Chicago."³

I know that he meant to exemplify the heights that the Marine's could reach with their stacking. But, whether he knew it or not, and if he did, perhaps he slipped in sharing his information, it was not to many years after my visit, that the Marines did have an opportunity to occupy Chicago with their mock-ishness.

On April 12, 2012, *The Chicago Tribune* reported that during the preparations for a NATO summit in the city that "as attention on security intensifies, the city announced Monday that a 'routine military training exercise' would be under way in and around Chicago from April 16 to 19 to help personnel preparing for overseas deployment learn to 'operate in urban environments.' A city spokeswoman said the training is done around the country and is not related to the NATO meeting."⁴

Under contract, Lockheed Martin has been building Urban Operations Training Systems all over the U.S. They are often city-

³ Podcast documentation posted on website for "Mapping the Desert/Deserting the Map: An Interdisciplinary Response," Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside. Accessed on May 31, 2012, <http://www.sweeney.ucr.edu/exhibitions/mappingthedesert/>.

⁴ Coen, Jeff and Heinzmann, David, "Chicago preparing for NATO summit," *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 2012. Accessed on May 31, 2012, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chi-nato-training-exercises-in-chicago-underway-20120416,0,1795383.story>.

size simulation facilities, like the one in Twentynine Palms, to help soldiers maintain their skills that they honed patrolling cities overseas and to prepare for the future.⁵

There are several districts that make up the one in Twentynine Palms, covering 274 acres in the desert. Fake markets, hotels and other businesses are populated with actors who create scenarios, ranging from humanitarian relief efforts to peacekeeping to police work and direct combat. The town can also be populated with up to 15,000 Marines for a training simulation.

The simulations involve not only what the Marines can see, but they are also be trained to find escape tunnels, weapons caches, watch for where the last man in a line could be taken hostage, deal with hidden bombs in what would appear to be abandoned vehicles. There are thousands of linear feet of underground tunnels so that the actors can appear most anywhere throughout the city to simulate a surprise attack. Occasionally, there are shrapnel-free, special-effect explosions to mimic incoming missiles or suicide bombers, perhaps. Either way, you can't trust a carpet seller, right?

Unfortunately, I cannot help but think that Marine's training in both mock cities and real cities, both abroad and domestically, is unsaid preparation for an extended martial law. My gut response is to think that this would be implemented during a financial crisis brought on by diminishing oil supplies. However,

⁵ Ackerman, Spencer, "Lockheed Gets Big Bucks to Prep Soldiers for Urban War," *Wired* magazine, Danger Room column, January 18, 2011. Accessed on June 1, 2012, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/01/lockheed-gets-big-bucks-to-prep-soldiers-in-urban-war/>.

10 Tyler Stallings

living here on the edge of the Mojave, and thinking about the many arid lands around the world, several of which have been the settings for war, it seems that another resource will be the reason for military occupation: water.

++++

While staying abreast of the mock city construction and mock military exercises in U.S. cities in these past few months, it was during this time that author Ernest Callenbach died on April 16, 2012.

He wrote the novel *Ecotopia*, which he self-published in 1975⁶. It became a cult success, telling the story of a utopian world in which Northern California, Oregon, and Washington had seceded from the United States in order to live in a “steady-state” with the environment, which we call “sustainability” today, or more radically, “permaculture.” When he wrote the novel, he was well into his career as the editor of *Film Quarterly*, which he edited for 33 years.

The book was inspired from his desire to write a magazine article about the problem of waste in the consumer society that surrounded him in the early 1970s. Instead, he opted to write a speculative novel about a country that embraced recycling, among other changes in social values. In a sense, the novel became an

⁶ Callenbach, Ernest. *Ecotopia* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1975, 30th anniversary edition). <http://ernestcallenbach.com/Books.html>

extended magazine article, eschewing characterization for observations about this new society, told from the point of view of a reporter from the United States entering into Ecotopia for the first time in twenty years after secession.

Soon after reading *Ecotopia*, I wanted to imitate his action of using writing to bear witness. However, I wanted the setting of my book to encompass a particular location and passion where I live, the arid land of Southern California.

In a true moment of inspiration, the name, “Aridtopia,” formed in my mind quickly.

I searched the web for any sign of its use. I found none, which was a surprise to me, as the name had become commonplace in my thoughts already in just a short amount of time. Immediately, I registered the web domain, www.aridtopia.com.

++++

Here is the beginning of defining Aridtopia through fiction, but with the sensibility of a pamphleteer, ranter, and activist:

Aridtopia is a speculative, utopian community in the Mojave Desert. It was founded when parts of southern California and Nevada, along with all of Arizona and New Mexico seceded from the United States to create a “dry-water” ecosystem: a balance between human beings, water, and the desert. It is one of several new nations created after the U.S. federal government abdicated central control in light of economic, environmental, and educational collapses. Today, the U.S. is composed of its original

12 Tyler Stallings

thirteen states from centuries ago, and has been renamed The Thirteen United States (TUS). Now, decades later, after The Grand Secession, Aridtopia is publishing a short history that is for the benefit of its citizens, its neighbor nations, and The Thirteen United States. It's also for TUS adherents who live in the new nations, but hope to reunite the land from Pacific to Atlantic Oceans, as it was at one time in the near past.

History in Aridtopia is told from personal accounts only. Individuals are held accountable, not governments, corporations, families, tribes, or partners.

I will start with a description of where I live. One's environment and one's spirit are inseparable, although they may change over time, but in tandem.

I live on a former Marine Corps base in the Mojave Desert, about 140 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. In the past, First Nations people would claim certain geographical sites as sacred, such as mountains, as the source of the birth of their people—upwelling from the depths of the planet. After The Grand Secession, Aridtopians decided to repurpose past structures as a way to repurpose them for a dry-water state but also to rehabilitate the land, to make it sacred again. Although, not in terms of being a site of mythical birth, but as a recognized partner in developing a new life.

I live in what was once a city, but not a city, a mock city for military combat training in urban settings. Constructed with stacked shipping containers that are bolted together, they resemble adobe pueblos of the past, as in the five storied, terraced ones in

the San Juan country in northern New Mexico, like Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon.

When this was an Iraqi mock-village, one side of the central plaza had narrow streets and dense housing to represent the poorer inhabitants, while the other arm that extended from the opposite side of the plaza had wider streets and less dense housing to represent the upper class. These variations allowed for simulations on how to maneuver a tank through varying street widths. We have not such distinctions in the reformed plan. Like kivas in the past, there is no privileged seat. There is no throne.

Aridtopians need to work together a lot. Since life is very communal for now, our homes tend to be small and simple. Instead, the big structures are the Gathering Spots. A couple of hundred years ago in desert towns, such a spot might have been the town saloon--boxes with giant false fronts to suggest grandeur. Inside, you see fancy, carved bars that could be either a place to sip a drink or perhaps a baroque altar. You can see the values of pioneers embodied in the architecture. It was largely men who came out with the shirts on their back to make stakes in mining or ranching. Hard work, hard life, hard drinking. But most of these towns are gone because wood is not native to the deserts, at least not the way it was used for stud and clapboard. Instead, we have centuries-old, adobe cliff dwellings, among other structures, still standing throughout the southwest.

Like the long history of desert architecture, whether ancient, United Statesean, or where I stand now, the main design features in Aridtopia are open plans, in which the interior and

exterior flow into one another, but including barriers against the constant and intense sunlight. You see canopies, loggias, and perforated screens everywhere. In fact, most people sleep under them at night rather than within the container of their walls, especially during the summer months.

We Aridtopians look at the teacher-plants around us for inspiration. There's the Saguaro, with its vertical rods, like tendons that hold it upright for years. There's the Cholla with its lattice structure and the Ocotillo with its emergent, tail-like slender stalk, usually over ten feet long, waving in the air under tensile strength.

The steel shipping containers are slowly replaced with less and less rigid walls; flexible ones that have been formed in order to withstand heat, wind, and a lack of precipitation. Cacti and succulents are full of secrets. Or, not really secrets, but simply there waiting for humans to recognize the integrity and strength of their designs.

In general, this approach to architecture is a part of what we call the Sun Agreement. For example, in one of our main squares, there is a giant canopy under which people gather. It is perforated to allow wind to pass through, so as not to tear the fabric, so as to provide shelter from the sun, but allow light to pass through as if through a tree's foliage, and finally to allow birds and insects to dart in and out freely. It is Sympathetic Architecture that works with the Sun, land, and low precipitation.

The world is based on relationships. Nothing happens that is not an outgrowth of relationships. From an Aridtopian viewpoint, the most radical things to do now are to grow your own food, to

choose your relationships, to decide how you want to breathe, and to create clean water. It is the end of the Imperial Human.

++++

Next chapter: How someone chose to join Aridtopia? Who was willing to believe in producerism rather than consumerism? Who was willing to get rid of third person narrator and enjoy "I" and "We"? Who was willing to stop watching and start feeling? Who was willing to change their habits? Who felt that they could leave others behind?

++++

This is where my imagination lives now.

"May moisture find you." □

Acknowledgments & Illustrations

Special Thanks to all of the artists involved and to *Arid Journal* Editors Greg Esser, Andrea Polli, and Kim Stringfellow; Arizona State University *Desert Initiative* Director Greg Esser; Armory Center of the Arts Gallery Director and Chief Curator Irene Tsatsos; *Artillery* magazine Editor Tulsa Kinney and Associate Editor Carrie Paterson; Blue West Books publishers Deborah Paes de Barros, Carlton Smith, and Mark Smith, and designer Ben Hatheway; Dick Hebdige, University of California, Santa Barbara; Fairleigh Brooks; KCET Director of Program Development and Production Juan Devis and KCET *Artbound* Managing Editor and Producer Drew Tewksbury; Eva Kirsch, Director, Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art at CSUSB; Laguna Art Museum Director Bolton Colburn (1998-2011); Naida Osline; Palm Springs Art Museum Donna and Cargill MacMillan Jr. Director of Art Daniell Cornell and The Getty Foundation's initiative *Pacific Standard Time*; Roberts & Tilton Gallery Co-Owners Bennett and Julie Roberts; Scott Smith Miller; University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA); UCR ARTSblock Executive Director Jonathan Green and UCR College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS) Dean Stephen Cullenberg, University of California, Riverside.

Essays published in similar versions appeared in:

Arid: A Journal of Desert Art, Design and Ecology: *Aridtopia's Loop Writing: A Desert Language*; *Repurposing the Los Angeles Aqueduct as a Pathway for Sacred Pilgrimages*; and *Secession in the Desert: How Walking through a Mock Iraqi City Led to Aridtopia*.
Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ: *Miguel Palma: An Artistic Exploration of the Sonoran Desert by a Human Alien*,

exhibition catalog for *Miguel Palma: Trajectory*. **Armory Center of the Arts**, Pasadena, CA: *Manifest Destination in Spaceport America* by *Connie Samaras*, exhibition catalog for *Connie Samaras: Tales of Tomorrow*. **Artillery Magazine**, Los Angeles, CA: *Concrete Islands Along California Freeways Jump-Start a New Society*; *Presence Machines: Philip K. Dick's Roman Empire and The Imaginary 20th Century*; and *Visiting with China's Ancient Terra Cotta Warriors, or Combat-Ready for Paradise*. **KCET Artbound**, Los Angeles, CA: *A Reconsideration of Fourth of July Fireworks and Independence Day in Light of Cai Guo-Qiang's Sky Ladder*; *An Inland Empire Afterlife: The Immortality Project, Cryonics, and a 26-Foot Tall Marilyn Monroe*; *An Iron Worm Whistles In My Mind*; *Area 51: A Sound Installation by Venzha Christ*; *Considering the Sound of an Air Conditioner while Perusing John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures*; *Hell's Union: Motorcycle Club Cuts as American Folk Art*; *The Idyll-Beast: A Wild Child Imaginary in Idyllwild, California*; *Levitating the Archaic Mind with Michael Heizer's Levitated Mass*; and *Resurrection Machines of Ancient Egypt in San Bernardino and of Ancient Cinema in Hollywood*. **Laguna Art Museum**, Laguna Beach, CA: *Laurie Brown: Recent Terrains*, exhibition brochure. **Palm Springs Art Museum**, Palm Springs, CA: *From Beefcake to Skatecake: Shifting Depictions of Masculinity and the Backyard Swimming Pool in Southern California*, exhibition catalog for *Backyard Oasis: The Swimming Pool in Southern California Photography*. **Roberts & Tilton Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA: *Pump Up the Realism: Todd Brainard's Paintings*, exhibition catalog. **UCR ARTSblock**, Riverside, CA: *Cabins in the Desert: Ruminating on Kim Stringfellow's Exploration of Jackrabbit Homesteads*, exhibition brochure for *Jackrabbit Homestead: Tracing the Small Tract Act in the Southern California Landscape, 1938-2008, a project by Kim Stringfellow*; *Free Enterprise: The Art of Citizen Space Exploration*, exhibition catalog; and *Lewis deSoto & Erin Neff: Tahquitz*, exhibition brochure.

Illustrations (listed in order of appearance in the book)

Title page: photograph by Tyler Stallings, view from inside the author's "MiniCooperMarsRover" looking forwards and backwards simultaneously at the Mojave Desert.

Secession in the Desert: How Walking through a Mock Iraqi City Led to Aridtopia: photographs by Tyler Stallings of Mock Iraqi city at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms.

Aridtopia's Loop Writing: A Desert Language: photographs by Tyler Stallings, top: Ocotillo at night, bottom: kneeling woman, both images taken in Joshua Tree National Park.

Concrete Islands Along California Freeways Jump-Start a New Society: photographs by Naida Oslie, top: concrete island as the 60, 91, 215 freeway interchange, Riverside, CA, bottom: concrete island at Avenue L exit off the 14 freeway, Landcaster, CA.

Repurposing the Los Angeles Aqueduct as a Pathway for Sacred Pilgrimages: handdrawn map by Tyler Stallings; photographs by Tyler Stallings from journey through Owens Valley, CA.

An Iron Worm Whistles In My Mind: photographs by Tyler Stallings of cargo train traversing the dry bed of the Santa Ana River, Riverside, CA, and old Union Pacific train engine on display in Fremont Park, Riverside, CA.

Considering the Sound of an Air Conditioner while Perusing John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures: top: *I Ching* hexagram, courtesy of Wikipedia Commons, bottom: photograph by Tyler Stallings of the air conditioning unit in the author's home.

Area 51: A Sound Installation by Venzha Christ: top: photograph by Anas Etan of Venzha Christ taking sound recordings around Area 51, bottom: photograph by Nikolay Maslov showing detail from *Area 51* installation at UCR ARTSblock.

Pump Up the Realism: Todd Brainard's Paintings: top: Todd Brainard, *Field 31*, 2002, oil on birch panel, 40 x 60 inches, courtesy of the artist, bottom: Todd Brainard, *Lot 57A: Southeast View*, 2002, oil on birch panel, 32 x 48 inches, courtesy of the artist.

Laurie Brown: Recent Terrains: top: Laurie Brown, *Recent Terrains #1, Laguna Hills, CA*, 1991, silver print, 34" x 49" courtesy of the artist, bottom: Laurie Brown, *Divining Western Waters #13*, 1995, Iris digital print, 24" x 30" courtesy of the artist.

Cabins in the Desert: Ruminating on Kim Stringfellow's Exploration of Jackrabbit Homesteads: top: Kim Stringfellow, *Brewer Homestead, U.S. Patent No. 1146096*, 2006-2008, photograph, courtesy of the artist, bottom: Kim Stringfellow, *Interior of Conzelman Homestead, U.S. Patent No. 1170083*, photograph courtesy of the artist.

From Beefcake to Skatecake: Shifting Depictions of Masculinity and the Backyard Swimming Pool in Southern California: photograph by Tyler Stallings of empty backyard swimming pool, Riverside, CA.

Free Enterprise: The Art of Citizen Space Exploration: top: Bradley Pitts, still image from the video installation *Singular Oscillations*, 2008. Pitts is floating and falling freely within the cabin of the Russian parabolic-flight aircraft with his eyes closed and ears blocked. The project is an exploration of trajectory and the empty volume of the plane in and of itself. Copyright 2008, Bradley Pitts Studio. All rights reserved, bottom image: photograph by Tyler Stallings of entrance to Mojave Air and Space Port, Mojave, CA.

Manifest Destination in Spaceport America by Connie

Samaras: top: Connie Samaras, *Spaceport America: Terminal Entry*, 2010, archival inkjet print from film, 30x40, edition of 5, photo courtesy of the artist, bottom: Connie Samaras, *Spaceport America: Terminal Hanger Facility, Facing Mission Control*, 2010, archival inkjet print from film, 30x40, edition of 5, photo courtesy of the artist.

Miguel Palma: An Artistic Exploration of the Sonoran Desert by

a Human Alien: top: Miguel Palma, *Trajectory* exhibition, *In Image We Trust*. 2011-2012, mixed media, kinetic installation, photo courtesy Arizona State University Art Museum. The sculpture featured a model of an F16 fighter jet jutting above the conglomeration of toys and domestic items with a small surveillance camera in its nose, bottom: Miguel Palma, *Trajectory* exhibition, repurposed 1985 M1008 CUCV troop carrier for exploring the Sonoran Desert as if on another planet, 2011-2012, photo courtesy of Arizona State University Art Museum.

A Reconsideration of Fourth of July Fireworks and Independence Day in Light of Cai Guo-Qiang's Sky Ladder:

photographs by Tyler Stallings of Fourth of July fireworks shot from atop Mt. Rubidoux, Riverside, CA.

Presence Machines: Philip K. Dick's Roman Empire and The Imaginary 20th Century:

top: photograph of ancient Roman Forum courtesy of Wikipedia Commons, bottom: photograph by Tyler Stallings of interior atrium of Bradbury Building, downtown Los Angeles, featured in the film *Bladerunner* that was based on Dick's novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sleep?*.

Levitating the Archaic Mind with Michael Heizer's Levitated

Mass: photographs by Tyler Stallings, top: rock quarry in Riverside, CA where Heizer's rock was situated, and of La Brea Tar Pits, located near Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The Idyll-Beast: A Wild Child Imaginary in Idyllwild, California: photographs by Tyler Stallings and courtesy of David Jerome of Idyll-Beast Museum, Idyllwild, CA.

Lewis deSoto & Erin Neff: *Tahquitz*: photograph by Lewis deSoto of installation at UCR ARTSblock: Lewis deSoto & Erin Neff, *Tahquitz*, 2012, sound, voice, foam, steel and fiberglass boulder, speakers, transparent map, glass gobo of Cahuilla basket design, Edison Home Phonograph (wax cylinder recorder/player), table for phonograph, tables for books, and video monitors. Photos courtesy of Lewis deSoto. Installation views at Culver Center of the Arts, University of California, Riverside.

Resurrection Machines of Ancient Egypt in San Bernardino and of Ancient Cinema in Hollywood: top: photograph of set design for *The Ten Commandments* built on the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes on the California coast in 1923, bottom: photograph of set of four canopic jars for Ankh-Payee-Heri, limestone, Egypt, 1085-715 B.C. RAFFMA, the Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art at CSUSB. Permanent Egyptian Collection. Photo by Robert A. Whitehead/CSUSB.

An Inland Empire Afterlife: The Immortality Project, Cryonics, and a 26-Foot Tall Marilyn Monroe: photograph by Tyler Stallings of twenty-six foot tall Marilyn Monroe statue in Palm Springs, CA, *Forever Marilyn* by Seward Johnson.

Hell's Union: Motorcycle Club Cuts as American Folk Art: photograph by Jeff Decker of Hell's Union motorcycle club cut.

Visiting with China's Ancient Terra Cotta Warriors, or Combat-Ready for Paradise: top: photograph of Terra Cotta Warriors on display in China courtesy of Wikipedia Commons, bottom: photograph by Tyler Stallings of broken Terra Cotta Warrior on display at Bowers Museum, Santa Ana, CA. □