

**Adam Davis**

beyond  
the  
tangible  
universe  
as  
you  
understand  
it

September 10 - October 11, 2012

**CERRITOS COLLEGE ART GALLERY**

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## **Art Gallery**

**Cerritos College**

**11110 Alondra Blvd**

**Norwalk, CA 90650**

<b>Curatorial Essay: <i>Exhuming Machines</i></b>	04
<b>Installation Shots &amp; Video Stills</b>	12
<b>Audio Transcripts</b>	18
<b>An Artist's Travelogue: <i>Images of the Levant</i></b>	30
<b>About the Artist: <i>Adam Davis</i></b>	34
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	40

# Curatorial Essay



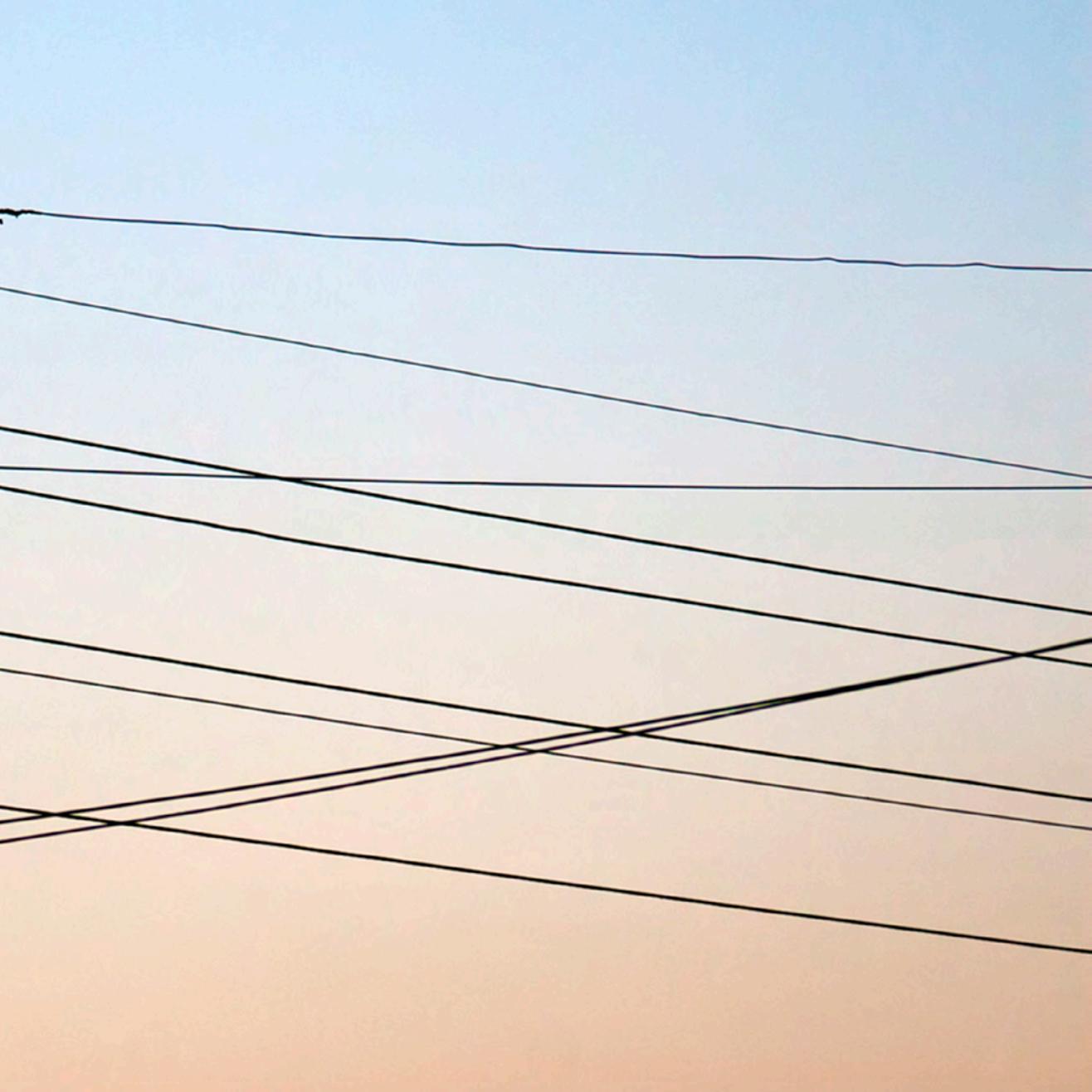
## **Exhumaning Machines: On the Xenopoetics Of Dematerialized Transmissions**

*But sometimes, when you're talking to yourself, you're not really talking to yourself, right? You're kind of assuming an audience, and maybe that's ... I think, that's the time ... those are the times I am most likely sending something out. I mean, why else would you send a transmission outside of the physical universe, if it wasn't because you felt like your life outside of any other context just seemed too alone?*<sup>1</sup>

*Memory holes are gates and access points; they conduct remembering and other modes of access toward a memory that belongs to the outside.*<sup>2</sup>

Adam Davis' impressive new project, *beyond the tangible universe as you understand it*, consists of a four-channel video installation probing the fuzzy edges of human experience and the transgressive events that bring us beyond the permeable membranes of our own imaginations. Ostensibly exploring the topic of sending and receiving transmissions from beyond the physical universe, both as we collectively understand it and individually experience it, the true power of this work comes in its paradoxical revelations about the tangible world and our very human efforts to comprehend our place within it. With equal parts reference to quantum physics, religious devotion, and atheistic disdain, the project ultimately serves as a sociological, and even metaphysical, investigation into the diversity of beliefs, the nature of hope, and the power of skepticism within us all. Viewed in the round and thirty-three minutes in length, *beyond the tangible universe as you understand it* combines looping video, produced from digitally manipulated images of transmission wires and power lines that were gathered by the artist while on residency in Amman, Jordan, with audio in thirteen different, alternating, and often-simultaneous, languages, culled from field interviews conducted throughout the Levant, Spain and the United States.





The initial impetus for the project was a side trip from his Jordanian artist residency to Syria, just prior to the current civil uprising. While staying in Hama, Syria, Davis encountered that city's famous water wheels, which, on the surface, appear to serve no beneficial function besides tourist spectacle. Like the Egyptian Colossi of Memnon in Thebes or the proverbial Hum in Taos, New Mexico, the wheels create a droning sound that is both jarring and meditative. As Davis describes it, they seemed to be channeling something larger – familiar and, yet, unidentifiable. These accidental musical instruments, playing metal, playing themselves, became the springboard for Davis' ongoing exhumation of visual and auditory xenopoetics. Inspired by the acute visibility of contemporary infrastructure that now ubiquitously crisscrosses the ancient cities of the Middle East (the seemingly foreign telephone wires, speaker cables, and power lines), Davis created aesthetic, yet semi-monstrous, digital assemblages out of his travel photos and set them adrift against video footage of a listless sky. Forged into mysterious variations of a Gordian knot, becoming virtual manifestations of Negarestani's "Mesopotamian axis of communication,"<sup>3</sup> these assemblages seem both familiar and, yet, otherworldly, hovering in the sky as if by some alien propulsion, like the inscrutable and omnipresent mothership in the recent Spanish film, *Extraterrestrial*.<sup>4</sup> Voiceovers, in English, Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, Farsi, Urdu, French, Spanish, Swiss German, Korean and Mandarin, mixed with modulated recordings from Hama's waterwheels, produce an ephemeral space for the viewer to ponder the unstable intersection of the physical and the intangible.

Wires are, of course, the perfect visual metaphor for the hybridity of the real and the symbolic in our contemporary experience. From telegrams (which ran in tandem with railroad lines), to the transmission of early photoradiograms (the basis for newswire services

and fax machines), and, ultimately, to the Internet, cables have been carriers of both power and information, increasingly as convergent imagery and audio, that collectively function to bring us beyond a specific and localized environment, transmitting voices, pictures, and video from elsewhere, from “over there” to “over here,” and in many ways confusing the distinction between the two.<sup>5</sup> In his recent theoretical treatise, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*, the Iranian philosopher Reza Negarestani tellingly connects transmission wires to rat tails, and the viral nature of information to rabies and plague:

As they vibrate, tails print thousands of traces and images, not on a film (*pellicule*) but on and through a space enmeshed by the commotion of transient traces, trajectories of disease and fleeting signs; much like a digital wireframe architecture which does not compartmentalize space to fragments of interior and exterior localities, but becomes a free-play and perforated architecture engineered by the swerving motions of a sparkling tail-wire whipping the space.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, as the recent technologies of wireless connectivity and inductive charging quickly make wires themselves obsolete, this metaphor becomes ever more complicated, wires as Möbius strips. We are entering a world, and therefore must come to terms with a future, where information and power no longer travel by wires at all, but instead both hover all around us in the air, an intangible drone that we cannot register with our ears, a warfare of vibrations that is no less real, no less effective and affective, in its absence from our consciousness.

**James MacDevitt, Director/Curator**  
**August 2012**



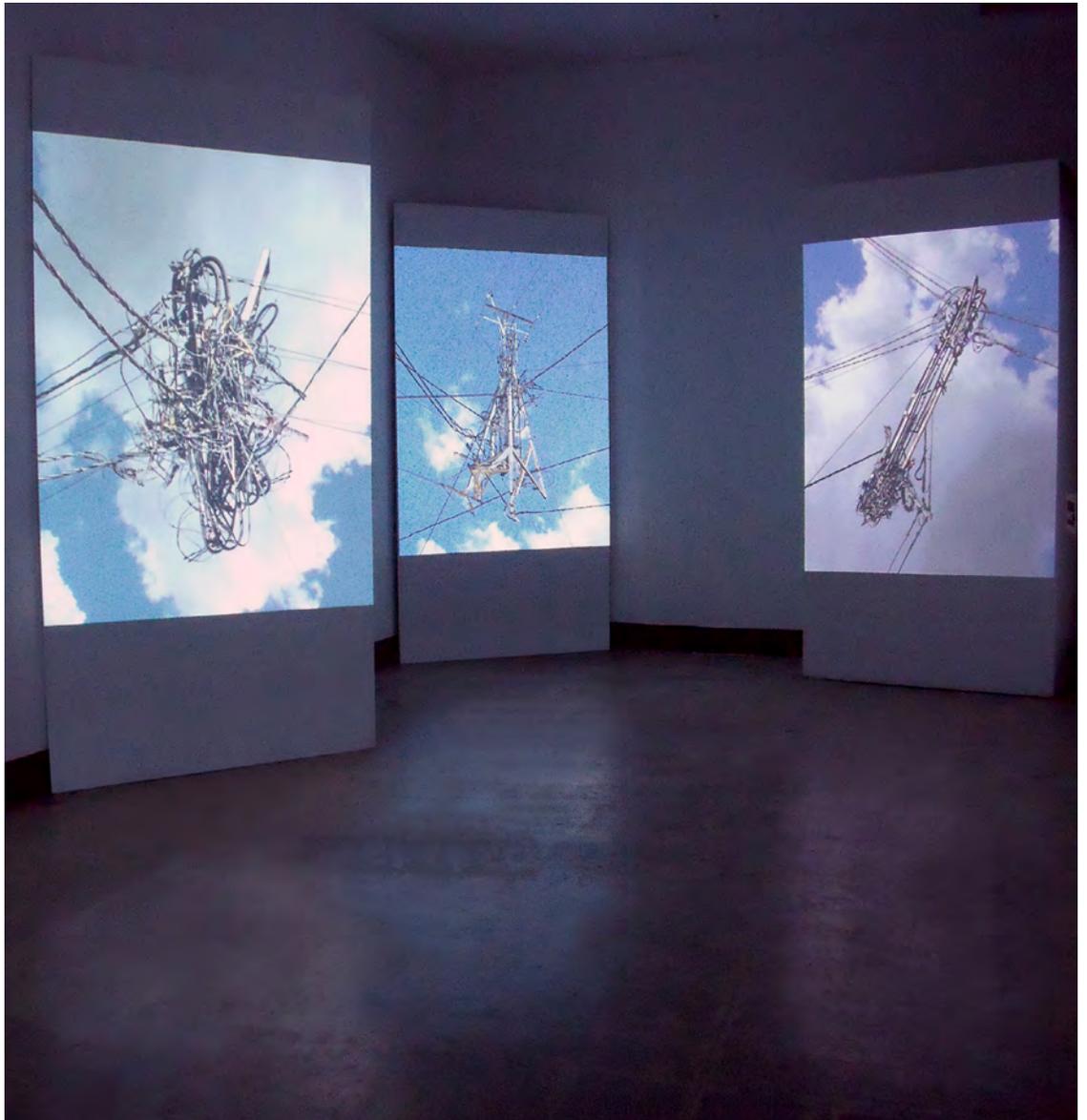
## Notes

1. *Beyond the Tangible Universe as You Understand It*, dir. Adam Davis (np., 2011). 4 DVDs, Video Installation.
2. Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Victoria, Australia: re:press, 2008), 68.
3. Ibid.
4. *Extraterrestrial*, writ. Nacho Vigalondo, dir. Nacho Vigalondo (Entertainment One, 2011). DVD.
5. David Horvitz, 'Sir W. Mitchell-Thomson,' *Triple Canopy* (16: *They Were Us*, May 2012). Web. August 8, 2012.
6. Negarestani, op. cit., 52.





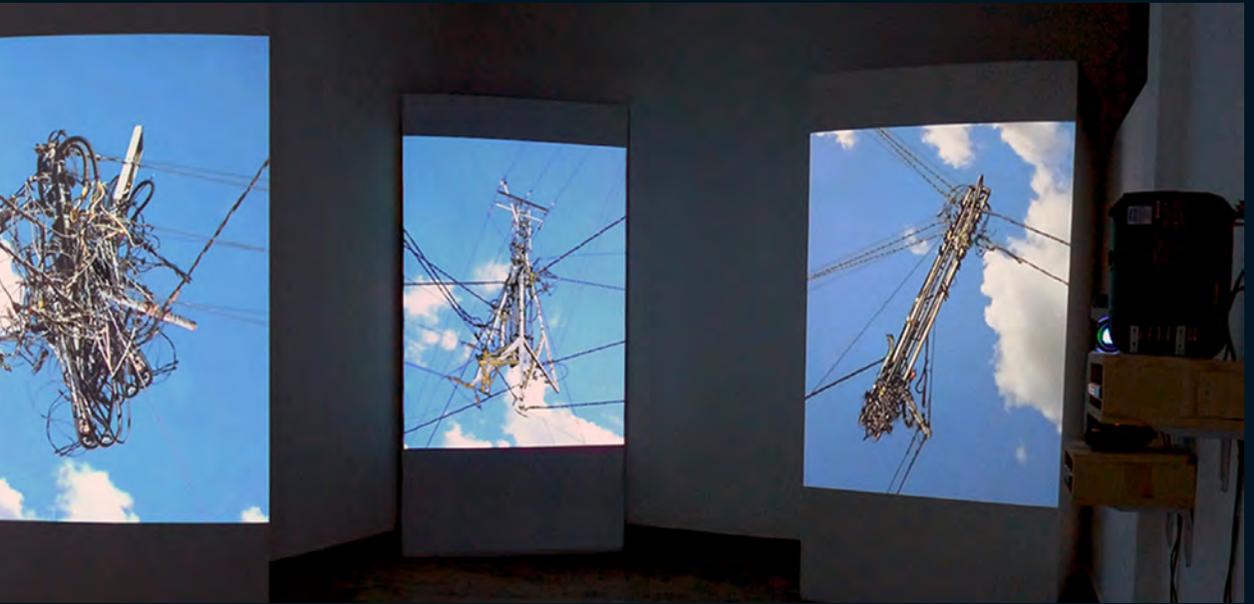
**Installation Shots & Video Stills**





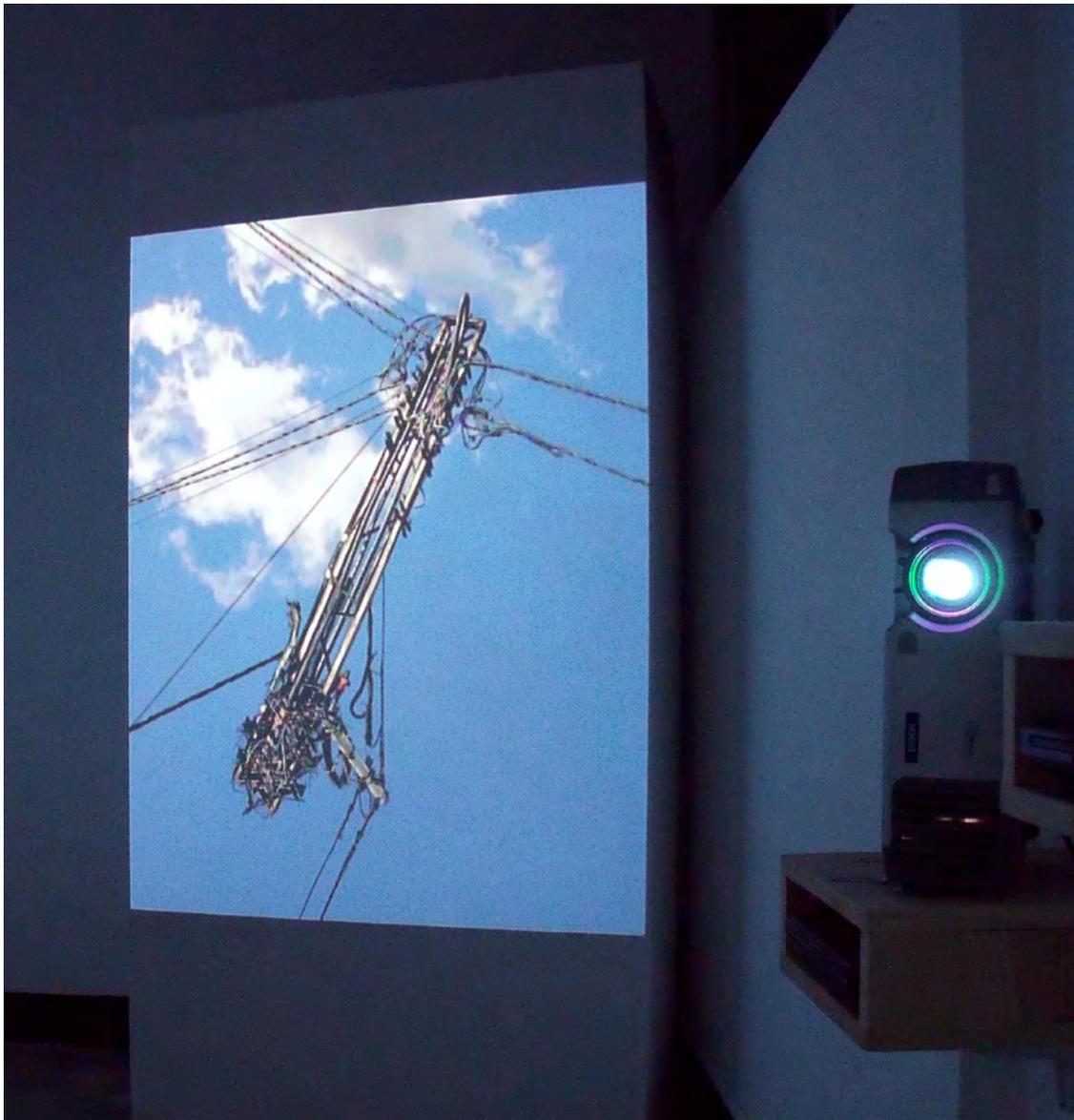
*Top Image:*  
Partial Panorama of Installation





*Bottom Four Images:*  
Untitled Digital Video Stills







# Audio Transcripts





**The following text contains transcripts and translations of the recorded responses used as source material for the audio component of the installation.**

The randomly selected transcriptions are presented in no particular order and do not correspond directly to their placement within the project itself.

**All participants were responding to the same question:**

*Have you ever sent or received transmissions from beyond the physical universe as you understand it?*

### **Respondent One**

When I was about twenty-one or twenty-two, I did something very stupid. I got in really big trouble, went to jail, and was facing a mandatory minimum of six years in prison. At this age I had been an atheist for many years already. So I am sitting in my jail cell, as an atheist mind you, I tried again. I said “God, if you really there you will get me out of this. I am not a bad person, I shouldn’t be going to jail for six years. I know I am an atheist, but this is not a choice that I consciously made, it’s just the way I am wired. I tried to talk to you in the past, I never got anything back, so please don’t blame me. But, if you get me out of this, I will consider this a miracle and I will have no choice but to believe in you.” So, my dad bailed me out of jail, I got a lawyer, and went to court. First court date, there was a continuation because the cop didn’t show. Second, a couple of weeks later, same thing, the cop didn’t show. Finally, like the third or the fourth, again the prosecuting officer still was not there. So my lawyer and the judge they were talking. I wasn’t sure what they were talking about. The next thing I know, the judge looks very angry and he dismisses the case. Completely dismissed. Apparently the prosecuting officer got promoted to the DEA, he moved to Washington DC, and just ditched his case. I guess, you know, I should have considered this a miracle because it was a one in a million chance, but, you know, I couldn’t do it, and I just wrote it off as luck.

### **Respondent Two**

No I haven’t sent messages, I don’t believe in it, nor have I received messages. I wish I would receive them though, so I could believe in it.

*Original in Korean*

### **Respondent Three**

I made a website called emailthedead.net, and I just asked the world, “Has anybody gotten an email from a dead person?”

March 28th, 2002: I received this email from my friend’s dead older brother, but my sister erased it. She’s only thirteen and I am fifteen.

*Dearest,*

*I only have a moment. Please believe for me. Everything vibrates. It’s all about the little things. Dreams are real, you will see. Romantic love is not real love. Time is a construction. There is evil in the world, but it’s not what people think it is. Jesus is real but he’s like a hippy. He hates earth religion. God is real, but it’s coming from your heart. It’s all about poetry; it’s all about dancing. Please send my love to mom. I don’t have her address here.*

### **Respondent Four**

When I was small I had a piano teacher who used to tell me that there were djinns and there were also ghosts. And she knew that I didn’t believe her, but she told me lots of stories. So then she told me this story about how this ghost came into someone, a djinn, and went away inside a cloud. So when I went back home there were djinns EVERYWHERE. There was a picture of Krishna with Gopi, and at night I used to feel really thirsty, but I couldn’t go downstairs to the kitchen because I used to have this fear about what would happen if this djinn came and ate me up. And also of which room the djinn would come in. At night I used to have a lot of fear about djinns being everywhere. All these places were filled with djinns. I used to get very scared. Very scared.

*Original in Urdu*

### **Respondent Five**

I was diagnosed with Cancer when I was young... thank god it wasn't in a late stage. So I went into a long series of chemotherapy sessions that were very slowly making a progress to my medical status. Until I reached a point where I had 30 sessions left; the doctors at the hospital back then all agreed on a total of 30 radiation therapy sessions for me, so when I left the hospital I was feeling very exhausted from the treatment. As it had really affected me on all levels, socially and health-wise, it was really tiring! I was generally getting tired of this.

That day I finished my first radiation therapy session, when I left the hospital I looked at the sky and said "God, I'm tired, I'm really tired, and you God promise to answer if we pray to you" it seriously felt like I was talking to God and I felt God had answered my prayer through a lady that was passing by the street. I was walking while talking to God when I saw a very poor lady walking with a baby that was crying, and she too was crying, so I asked her "Do you need help, do you need anything?" She told me that her baby was hungry and there was no milk coming out of her breast to feed him. She wasn't being needy, all what she said was she wanted to find a way to feed the baby but she did not have money, so she asked if I could help her. I said "of course" and asked her what she would want. She said "I want a can of milk for this baby as it has been almost two days since he ate and I can't breastfeed him anymore". I didn't want to give her any money. Instantly, I wanted to make sure that her need was met in the best way possible, even though I didn't know her and she didn't know me. So I went to the pharmacy and bought the can of milk, and she was very very happy, as if I, as if I had gotten her out of the grave or something. She

prayed for me and said "may god reconcile you and give you sustenance". When I continued walking my way I said to God, "You God say that charity heals diseases, and I just did and followed what you say, so did you God answer my prayer as I'm sure you will?" Praise to god, six sessions later I defeated cancer. I was scheduled to do a check-up imaging every ten sessions, and after six, I recovered even though I was told I had thir ty scheduled. From thirty to six sessions, that was magnificent! So until this day I believe when we talk to God, when we talk to the creator of everything, he can do anything! He can easily give to us in so many ways.

*Original in Arabic*

### **Respondent Six**

We had to do some repairs on our back porch, and underneath that porch we discovered half of a tombstone, a child's tombstone, this kid died when he was five or six maybe, a local kid. And after we found the tombstone, we picked it up from where it was; it wasn't where it belonged because it was in our house. And that night, later that night, and a few days after until we actually got rid of it, we noticed that our lights would switch on and off, and something had been messing with our alarm clock, anything that had, oh not an alarm clock, our phone, our phone had a little button, and if you'd push the button, you know it went right to speaker phone. So we heard that happen a few times. Inexplicable right? Except for the fact that we had just found this kids tombstone, and perhaps he was from a couple hundred years ago, and he was fascinated perhaps by switches - the spirit of this kid, whatever. I don't think it was the cats, couldn't have been the cats.

### **Respondent Seven**

Well, I was raised with a very rationalist way of thinking.... Uh... I... I don't believe in God. I'm always reluctant; I'm always resistant to thinking of external existence. Nevertheless, during meditation and relaxation exercises, I feel I am able to transmit vibrations toward other people, mainly through breath and voice. It's my only experience of communication in both directions that could be considered a reality outside of... beyond a physical universe. I have had absolutely no experiences of communication with anything beyond the physical universe occur to my person or my conscience, and that's something, I guess - that my reluctance to those external realities actually does not allow me to envisage/consider. had gotten her out of the grave or something. She prayed for me and said "may god reconcile you and give you sustenance". When I continued walking my way I said to God, "You God say that charity heals diseases, and I just did and followed what you say, so did you God answer my prayer as I'm sure you will?" Praise to god, six sessions later I defeated cancer. I was scheduled to do a check-up imaging every ten sessions, and after six, I recovered even though I was told I had thir ty scheduled. From thirty to six sessions, that was magnificent! So until this day I believe when we talk to God, when we talk to the creator of everything, he can do anything! He can easily give to us in so many ways.

*Original in French*

### **Respondent Eight**

During my wedding, I was standing underneath the *chuppah* (which is a Jewish ceremonial canopy) with my husband and the rabbi, and all of a sudden I noticed an extreme weight on my body that almost

knocked me over. And it was unbearable, and I realized it was the spirit of my grandmother who was there, and she was making herself known or wanting to make herself known by physically pressing on my body. And, she was almost overcompensating because the force was so severe, and I think she was also really pissed that she was dead because she had died maybe a year before the wedding, and she was really upset that she was not there, and that was part of why it felt physically so awful for me. And I think what I did at the time (because I just needed to do something) was I just acknowledged her presence. I just said (you know in my head or to her) I know you are here grandma, and I am glad you are here, and then the weight on my body subsided and it became more bearable after that.

### **Respondent Nine**

Some time after my grandfather passed, I had wished to communicate with him in some way. My hope was to receive any messages or last thoughts he may have wanted to give me. This would be done while I was sleeping and he would come speak to me. Admittedly this was all for selfish reasons, and alas, nothing resulted.

*Original in Mandarin*

### **Respondent Ten**

As a child I said prayers every night. And still, when something important, something is very important to me, I do think it is important to either meditate or pray to whatever higher being there is. Whether I am just conjuring within in me some kind of higher force, I don't know, but I think it does help me at least to verbalize, or if its internal, to at least meditate on or give words to some certain request I might have.

Usually, it's something big like the safety of a loved one, or health when someone is in trouble. I had a friend who was a born again Christian and his girlfriend was praying that they would find a blue car. They were shopping for cars and so she prayed to god that there would be a blue car. That constitutes abuse in my mind. That's not what praying is for – I don't think. I'm not, again, not for me to judge her is it, but I certainly would never pray for a certain color car.

### **Respondent Eleven**

We called spirits when we were teenagers. We didn't speak with them verbally; we spoke with them in writing. We put a coffee cup on top of letters and the cup would move, spelling out words. We would just think (not speak out loud) of what we wanted to communicate, placing our fingers on the coffee cup, and the spirits would spell out the response. I was about fifteen-sixteen years old. I was scared shitless, but we still did it. There were about four or five of us sitting at the edge of the dinner table doing it. We would shake we were so scared. We did this when our mother's were not around so we wouldn't get spanked.

*Original in Turkish*

### **Respondent Twelve**

I've never tried to send any kind of a transmission or communication to something beyond our universe, and I am not sure if that would be people who have died, or pets, or aliens, but regardless, I really don't think that type of communication is possible and I can't think of a time where I have ever attempted to do it. I don't think that I have ever been in a situation where I believed that someone or something was

trying to communicate with me. I can't think of a time where I have ever seen or heard something that I thought was a sign or a direct communication. I have memories of people who have passed and I think of them in my daily activities and think that they might have enjoyed something that I am seeing or doing, or might have thought something was funny. I certainly have déjà vu now and then, but I don't consider it be anything more than just sort of an everyday phenomenon that everybody experiences. There's no pattern to it, there are no particular messages in my déjà vu, no directions, no instructions, no patterns. I don't really think that it's possible for any one or anything from beyond to communicate with us here on earth.

### **Respondent Thirteen**

Sometimes you see something you think you've seen before, you feel like you've experienced it before, a situation which you feel has been repeated, even though reality says it hasn't. This is what we call the world of isthmus (*Barzakh*) or the "other" world, which exists for sure. Not because I believe in it, it's because it is the truth. For example, every year during Eid I go to the graveyard and visit my mom's father. I visit him and talk to him and listen to him, and I feel he answers me. I'd ask him if he knew what happened to us, I'd ask him to pray for us, I'd feel him answering me, and when I leave I leave in peace.

*Original in Arabic*

### **Respondent Fourteen**

I first started doing assignment I'd say about ten years ago. And I'm usually sent out on these assignments right when I am starting to fall asleep. And all my assignments entail my helping people

work through issues and problems. For example, on one assignment I flew to this area that reminded me a bit of the Grand Canyon, and there was a person standing there about to jump. So I went, I flew there, (telepathically flew there) and coaxed this person down. I've done different assignments throughout the years, its almost as if I am the eyes for an organization that can not see. Often times I will be placed in a room and I have to describe what I see. So the last one I was on I remember was in this wooden room, and it looked like an old barn almost, and someone inhabited it but I couldn't see the person, I just saw their belongings. So I was able to translate this to my bosses (I call them) who send me out on these assignments.

For a few years, during the Bush administration I was not on these assignments, and I was talking to my mother about this, and she had suggested that, well, since Bush was in office you weren't on your assignments, but now that Obama is back in office, I am in fact back in as well, meaning I am sent out on these assignments throughout the year. Some years there are less assignments other years there are more. I'd say this year there have been about three assignments I have been sent on. Their pretty top secret, I can't talk too much about them, but, suffice to say, I think this is good work, this is important work I am doing to help those in need in different parts of the galaxy, not only the earth, but the galaxy. I am sent all over so, different planets, different species that I help, I cultivate friendships. Sometimes I am invited into homes, dwellings, and talk to entities, people, however you want to call them.

### **Respondent Fifteen**

Back in the year 2000, I was being interviewed for a

chair position in Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia, and they arranged for me to stay at the old governor's mansion. This building was built around the time of the Civil War, I believe. When I arrived, a faculty member picked me up at the Atlanta airport, and it was around twelve o'clock. While I was unloading all of my luggage this faculty member said to me "Oh, has anyone talked to you about the ghosts in the mansion?" And as you know, this was an interview, so calmly I said to him "You know, this is the kind of thing that you tell people after they've stayed at the mansion, not before."

So he had already kind of set up for me how I was to interact with this space that I had never been in before. And so I was very apprehensive because it was twelve o'clock at night, and it was this huge four-story building, and I think there were only one or two people staying there. So when I walked up the stairs, it felt like there were people walking behind me, and I could feel the hairs of the back of my neck standing up. And I became very anxious, and then when I saw the room I was to stay in, it was the biggest bedroom I have ever stayed in, it must have been the master. And thinking of all the atrocities of the south, pre-Civil War, made me even more anxious, especially as a person of color living in this white supremacist governor's mansion.

And so, when I tried to go to sleep, I kept hearing things and I am sure just because of my anxiety things were being magnified for me. And so I couldn't sleep, and so what I did was I started to talk to whatever entity was there, and telling them that I did not come alone. And that I came with my own ancestors that were just as powerful, and that I came here meaning no harm, and I introduced all of my ancestors to

whoever was there with me in this room, and after I did that I was able to go to sleep.

*Original in Spanish*

### **Respondent Sixteen**

To tell the truth, I really never believed in an existence outside of this world. When I was little I asked my dad one time (just as a joke) to teach me about the Quarn and prayer. And then, one time I actuality did say the prayer (a few times I recited it) but I didn't believe that anyone or any existence outside of this world was listening. I try to never talk to anyone outside of this life and the world, and I try to never have any kind of relationship with them – because I know that they don't exist. No one has ever sent messages to me because there is no such thing.

*Original in Farsi*

### **Respondent Seventeen**

I was probably in fourth grade, and I was in the backyard of my Italian grandmother's yard with my younger cousin, and I would do anything to make my younger cousin laugh. So, a storm was coming, but no rain yet outside, as we were running around playing. And my grandmother, my nonna, had in one of the garden beds, a bathtub Virgin Mary statue. And to make my cousin laugh, I went up to the statue of the Virgin Mary and I started to pretty much bump and grind her. So I was whispering sweet nothings (as you could fill in the blanks) into the Virgin Mary's head, and then I crossed the line, and I went and took out my dong from my pants. And just as I touched her head, the light, the sky filled up with lightening as the storm was coming, and then we both just freaked out. And because, at that point in

my life, I was a practicing Roman Catholic, I thought that there's no way out of this one. So I thought I was going to hell, and that was the Lord's way, Mary's way, and her son Jesus' way of saying, "How dare you take my mother's name, or bathtub Virgin Mary ceramics statue in vein".

### **Respondent Eighteen**

My way of communicating is actually through a method called reconnection, invented by a man named Eric Pearl. And I don't know why, or for what reason, but it just helps and calms me down, makes me take a deep breath, and lets me calibrate the systems in my body and start over. I do it from time to time, I do it by myself or with my counselor, and it's wonderful.

*Original in Hebrew*

### **Respondent Nineteen**

Sometimes, when I meditate, I get a sense of peace back. I don't know if it comes from something outside of me, or if it's just because I sat there breathing deeply for a few minutes and it just calmed me down, you know, so, it's just so subjective because I have definitely had dreams that I felt like were very indicative of subconscious patterns or whatever that were going on in my life. And the dreams are really helpful for me in figuring out what to do next in decoding some sort of pattern that I was in, but I don't necessarily mean that it came from something outside of me. I practice, I use taro, but I kind of feel the same way about that. That it's more like working with symbols, and using the energy of the people around you to decode patterns, patterns that are innate in human life. But sometimes, when you're talking to yourself, you're not really talking to

yourself, right? You're kind of assuming an audience, and maybe that's ... I think, that's the time ... those are the times I am most likely sending something out. I mean, why else would you send a transmission outside of the physical universe, if it wasn't because you felt like your life outside of any other context just seemed too alone?

### **Respondent Twenty**

Although I do not feel that I mean to send messages to the world of the beyond or to hidden powers, I do it. For example, when I am on a plane, I would read a part of the Quarn, I may say "In The Name of God the Merciful." If I am frightened I would call on God's name.

Sometimes just before I sleep, if I for example felt that Alma [my sister] was not happy, or when my mother was sick, I did say something – call on what I assumed was a hidden power. I would say something like "I hope Alma becomes happy, I hope she gets accepted at university." I would say "I hope mama is not feeling too lonely." But I do not know whom these wishes are directed at, because as far as I know, I do not believe in a hidden power that is dedicated to address and answer my prayers.

I do not have a problem with another power out there, or a parallel intangible world – if there existed persons or institutions who are capable of realizing my prayers. But I do not believe in anything in particular, not in a particular power, nor do I even assume that someone out there even bothers with my prayers. Spontaneously, I do send out prayers, but intentionally, no, I would not send prayers of that type or expect them to be answered. I cannot recall ever sending out a prayer that was answered which

allowed me to think, "ah, there is a power out there."

*Original in Arabic*

### **Respondent Twenty-One**

I think there is so much of the physical universe that we don't understand. I think that when you're thinking of somebody, and suddenly you're thinking of them and they give you a call that second, I believe that's ESP. I believe not just that, but ESP exists somehow. I think that humans have lost touch with the five established senses, but also the other senses. Even intuition is probably built upon from experiences, but intuition is how you feel about something, and what are feelings? Feelings tap into these other senses.

### **Respondent Twenty-Two**

I've never try to communicate or transmit to a space which is not from our world, something that isn't physical, so I've never had this experience of trying to communicate with the beyond. And... referring to reception of a message, signal, or communication from the beyond, I don't remember having ever received a message that could have been supernatural or originated from dead people. I am a rational person, even if those phenomena of inexplicable communication are explicable; it's not a phenomenon that is close to me.

*Original in French*

### **Respondent Twenty-Three**

I know that we live in a compassionate universe, and we live in a compassionate universe that is conspiring to bring us the very best. And once we realize our own worthiness and that we are the heirs to the kingdom,

we begin to allow the highest good that is meant for us, to flow to us, and we accept that highest good. We no longer push it away, but we know that we are deserving of that highest good. So the transmissions that are flowing to me from this compassionate universe are really that I am loved beyond anything that I could even ever remotely begin to comprehend, and that I have been atoned, that I have experienced the at oneness with the source of my being with god, and so I know that through the transmission I receive of love, atonement, at-one-ment with the source, that I can relax at very deep levels of my being and I can really live in a deep state of trust understanding that everything truly is unfolding according to the divine plan and according to the divine blueprint, and I understand that there is a master plan for each one of our lives, and we simply learn to surrender to divine will and allow it all to unfold.

And thorough the teachings of yoga and meditation, I understand that the divine source that dwells within us will always guard us and guide us, protect us and direct us every step of the way, so it leads to a very deep sense of trust and surrender to gods will, and the ego and the personality just get out of the way and we align with the soul - which is the very truth of our being - and the soul is connected to pure spirit, just as the sunbeam connects to the sun itself, the source of its being, and we know that we are always nourished by that source. Nurtured and nourished by the very source of our being. And you feel the one life that flows through all of life flowing through you on a very regular basis, so a portion of the consciousness is always going back to the di vine transmission, the holy spirit speaking to us, speaking words of love, peace, loving kindness, harmony, and well being.

### **Respondent Twenty-Four**

I tried being a religious guy and I tried being a spiritual guy, and there is a huge difference between both. And while in the first one, just being a religious or a Muslim guy, you just focus on the material side of being Muslim - so you do the prayers and you do the fasting and you do everything and you just don't connect on a bigger level. But when I try to just disconnect myself from this idea of being committed to one religion, or to one book, or to one side, I just look at it differently and say that there is this spiritual need in you that needs to be fulfilled eventually by trying not to focus on the material world, and just thinking of the beyond level, the higher level of our life and what do we do, and that really made a difference for me at that point. When I started doing that I started maybe being more at peace with myself, and being more at peace with the world, and being more accepting of stuff that I wasn't accepting of at some point.

### **Respondent Twenty-Five**

I grew up in a devout Catholic family, and we said prayers every night (we said the rosary every night), so in that way I used to send transmissions beyond the physical universe. I'm not a practicing catholic now, but the prayers are still there in my memory and I do pray sometimes. I don't say the prayers that we said when we were children - like the 'Hail Mary' or the 'Our Father,' I talk to God sometimes. I'm not really sure if there is a God listening, but I do pray. The 'Hail Mary' is a prayer that's said over and over again in the rosary. You say it fifty times - there's five decades and ten Hail Mary's for each decade. So that was a prayer that was repeated over and over again when I was a child. It's kind of a misogynistic. You could say it's a misogynistic prayer because it talks

about Mary as a vessel carrying Jesus, and you can see that she really doesn't have her own power, she's just close to God, so she can pray for you and her prayer might be a little stronger than yours. So here's the Hail Mary:

*Hail Mary,  
Full of Grace,  
The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary,  
Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now,  
and at the hour of death.  
Amen.*

So you can see the role that Mary plays in the church, and how she is a model for women. I always disagreed with this as a child; I had a problem with the way women are viewed in the Catholic Church, so that's one of the reasons that I left the church.







**An Artist's Travelogue: *Images of the Levant***





Written Prayers Embedded in the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem, Israel  
Adam Davis, 2010



Worshipper Praying at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem, Israel  
Adam Davis, 2010

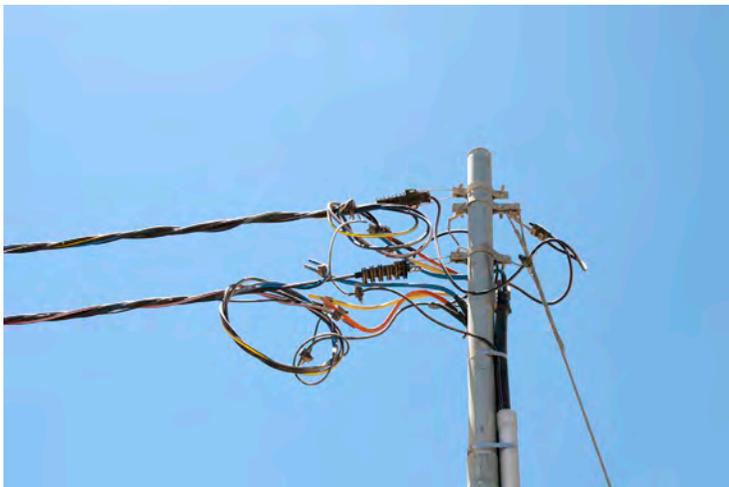
*Previous Two Pages:*  
Water Wheels, Hama, Syria  
Adam Davis, 2010

Transmission Wires, Lebanon  
Adam Davis, 2010



Minaret, Damascus, Syria  
Adam Davis, 2010





*On This Page:*

Various Transmission Wires and Power Lines,  
from throughout the Levant (primarily Amman, Jordan)  
Adam Davis, 2010



**About the Artist: Adam Davis**



## **Artist Statement**

Interrogating desire from a variety of angles has been a continuous and evolving thematic underpinning my research and professional practice throughout my career. Through formal and conceptual investigations into the nature of its symbiotic yet conflicted relationships with access, I create works that serve as a kind of scaffolding with which to display the two in all their intricacies. Some recent works provide vantage points into that scaffolding, facilitating insight into the complexities of compassion and love with regard to the living and the deceased, human and animal. Others actively navigate between the realms of conscious and unconscious utterance, bringing us back to the nexus of access and desire. To this end, I commonly employ archival accounts in conjunction with surrogate forms, articulated in mediums including but not limited to sculpture, photography, books and video. The finished works often combine humor with empathy, dethatching viewers from their existent cosmologies and directing them towards unfamiliar landscapes.

**Adam Davis**

## Biography

Chicago-born and LA-based, Adam Davis is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses, but is not limited to, sculpture, installation, video, animation, and photography. Davis received his BS from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and his MFA from the University of Arizona in Tucson. He has taught at San Diego Mesa College and Sothwestern College, as well as the Georgia College and State University, and he is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Scripps College in Claremont, CA. Davis has presented work in numerous solo and group exhibitions and has been an Artist-in-Residence at Bait Makan in Amman, Jordan; Homesession in Barcelona, Spain; Sculpture Space in Utica, New York; Svenska Konstskolans Vänner in Nykarleby, Finland; Lademoen Kunstnerverksteder in Trondheim, Norway; the Clay Studio in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena, Montana. In addition, he has been a recipient of a Community Arts Assistance Grant from the City Of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, curated the 65<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the prestigious Scripps Ceramic Annual, and has had his work included in Judith Schwartz's book *Confrontational Clay*, as well as Dr. Nishant Shahani's *Queer Retrosexualities: The Politics of Reparative Return*.





# Artist Profile

## Education

- 1999 University of Arizona, Tucson  
MFA, Department of Art
- 1995 University of Wisconsin, Madison  
BS, Department of Art

## Selected Exhibitions

- 2012 Let's Talk About Love Baby  
MOCAD, Detroit, MI
- 2011 On Use and Possession  
643 Project Space, Ventura, CA
- 2009 Creatures Great and Small  
Eagle Gallery, Murray State University, Murray, KY
- 2008 Binding With Briars  
Washington State University Art Gallery, Pullman, WA
- 2006 Take Out Your Hammers and Loosen Their Belts  
Milledgeville, GA - Leeds, AL - Vicksburg, MI - Waco, TX
- Losing Race  
New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, IN

## Curatorial

- 2009 Wearing It On Your Sleeve: Sympathizers, Empathizers, Provocateurs  
65th Scripps Ceramic Annual: Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Claremont, CA

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