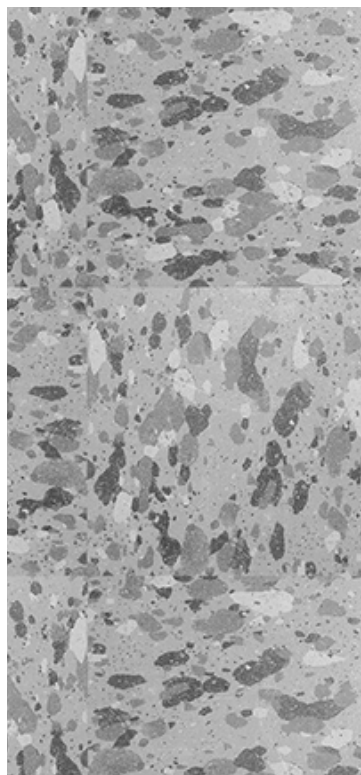
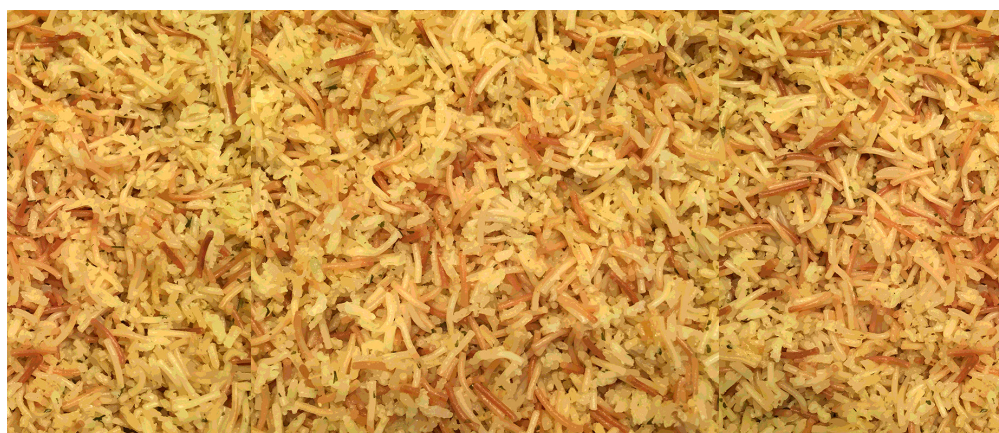
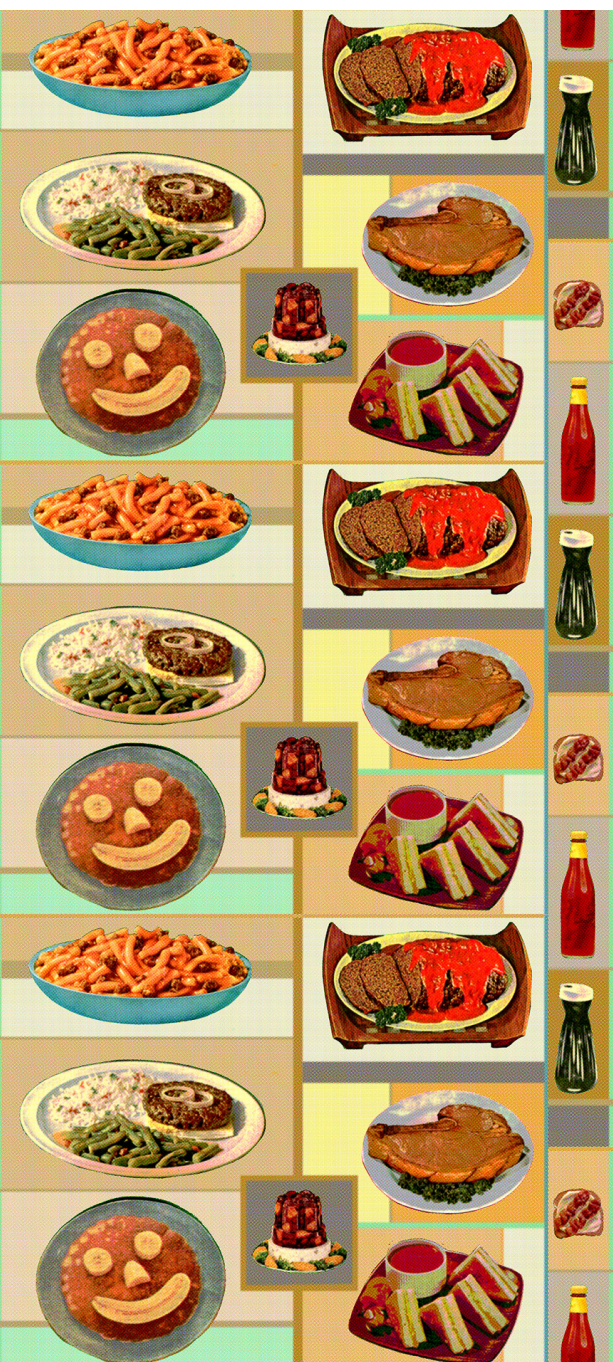




GALLERY GUIDE

SUE JOHNSON
HOME OF FUTURE THINGS

September 16 – November 11, 2016



The Martha and Robert Fogelman Galleries of Contemporary Art



SUE JOHNSON

HOME OF FUTURE THINGS

Featuring works by the artist Sue Johnson (b. 1957, San Francisco, CA), this exhibition considers the cyclical nature of mass consumption. Included are Johnson's small-scale works on paper as well as floor-to-ceiling vinyl panels and decals that transform the gallery into the interior of an ideal, modern home. As the exhibition title suggests, Johnson envisions a world in which the home is nostalgic and familiar, yet also reduced to an empty space simply existing to house various things.

Johnson's work makes various art historical allusions, ranging from ancient Greek mosaics and 17th-century Dutch still-life paintings to Dada and Pop collages. Despite spanning a vast expanse of time and place, these references share a common fascination with commodities and excess that Johnson remixes through a 21st-century lens. Specifically, her work is rooted in the Dutch still-life tradition of *vanitas*—images displaying symbolic objects that encourage the viewer to consider the transience of life. Her process intentionally blurs the boundaries between the real and imagined, historical and timeless, hand-painted and digital. What results is an immersive environment constantly toying with our perceptions.

The exhibition opens with works on paper from Johnson's series *Designs for Imaginary Shelves* (2011-13). Unlike the shelves depicted elsewhere in the exhibition, these are distinct in their emptiness, as well as their fanciful designs. Inspired by a Chinese-style, red lacquer circular shelf owned by Johnson's Swedish grandfather and given to her as a child, these imaginary shelves are designs for building a modern cabinet of curiosities waiting to be filled.

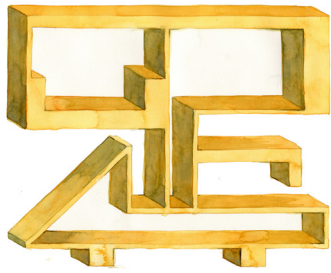
The almost ascetic simplicity of these works contrasts with the visual overload of Johnson's *Ready-Made Dream* (2013), an installation comprised of vinyl panels representing different rooms of a mid-century home that wrap the perimeter of the gallery. Johnson creates these scenes by digitally collaging images of objects sourced from popular magazines with elements she paints by hand. Her flattening of these distinctions creates a trompe-l'oeil effect in which the viewer is tricked into thinking what she is viewing is real and three-dimensional. Referencing Marcel Duchamp's readymades, Johnson presents a larger-than-life, prefabricated version of the "American Dream" built on the insatiable desire to consume. As one approaches the panels, the seemingly real objects and rooms begin to dissolve with varying degrees of pixelation. The inclusion of actual objects in the installation such as an avocado-green telephone and a paint-by-numbers painting next to ostensibly real "flooring" and "rug" decals that the artist created for the exhibition further confuses the distinction between reality and illusion.

While the bulk of Johnson's imagery references the booming consumer culture of the post-WWII period, the exhibition itself serves as a contemporary *vanitas*—an all-encompassing tableau that contemplates our continued obsession with material objects. The artist clips images from vintage magazines dense with advertisements selling the various products deemed essential for creating the ideal American home. In this process, Johnson has amassed an extensive collection of material purchased from websites such as eBay, thereby giving new life to old commerce.

Patricia Lee Daigle

**Director, The Martha and Robert Fogelman
Galleries of Contemporary Art**

DESIGNS FOR IMAGINARY SHELVES (2011-13)



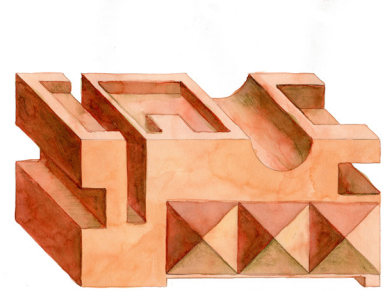
Sojourn in Venice (Yellow), 2012

Watercolor and pencil on paper
9 x 12 in.



Entertainment Cabinet No. 2 (Let's Make A Deal), 2013

Gouache and pencil on paper
20 x 16 in.



Sojourn in Venice (after Anthony Caro at Peggy Guggenheim Collection), 2012-13

Watercolor and pencil on paper
9 x 12 in.

OBJECTS



Anonymous, American Heritage 3D2, mid-20th century

Paint-by-numbers still-life painting | 16 x 12 in.
Collection of the artist



Avocado wall-mounted telephone with extra long cord, ca. 1970s

Dimensions variable
Collection of the artist

DECALS



Unswept Floor, 2016

Vinyl floor decal | 36 x 60 in.



Shag Lawn, 2016

Vinyl floor decal | 48 in. diameter



Construction Zone, 2016

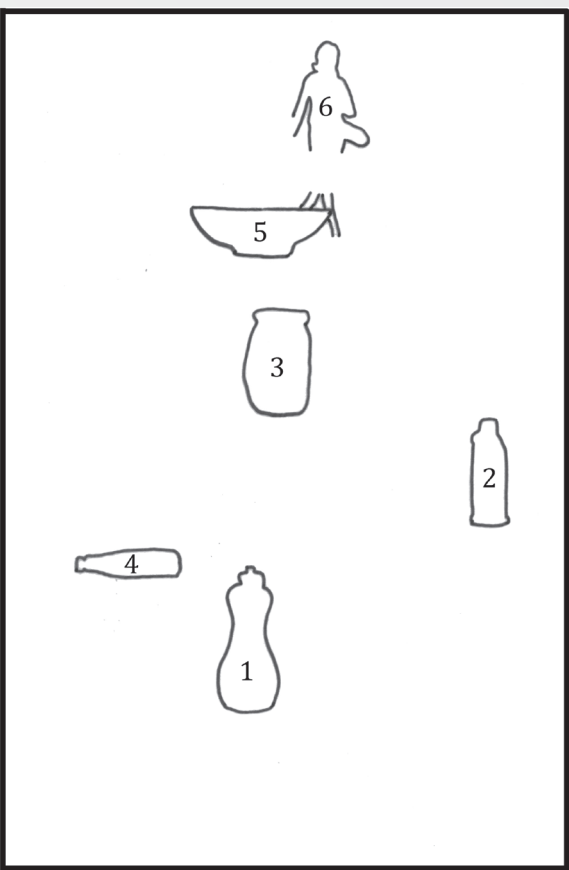
Vinyl floor decal | 48 x 48 in.

Selections from **READY-MADE DREAM, 2013**



*Here and There Room Divider*¹: *Just What is it that Makes Yesterday’s Homes so Similar, so Appealing?*², 2013

Print on vinyl | 115 x 75 in.



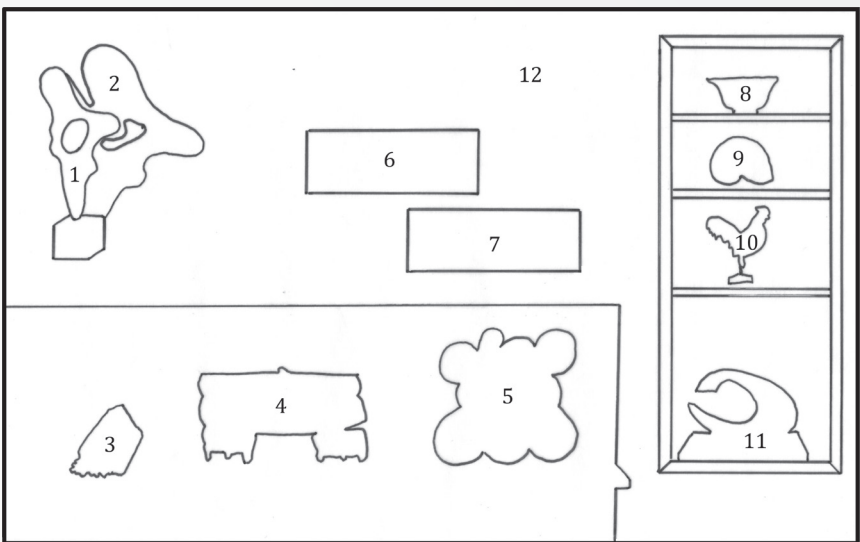
- 1 The new shape of a lemon
- 2 The shape of processed cheese food
- 3 The shape of mayonnaise
- 4 The shape of ketchup
- 5 The shape of something valuable
- 6 The shape of something ideal

1 *Here and There Room Divider* openly recreates the look of mass-produced plastic dollhouse furniture manufactured by Louis Marx and Company. Marx furniture was cast in a single color, and featured details of everyday objects as if placed on surfaces in a real house.
2 Title is an allusion to the now iconic 1956 collage by British pop artist, Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today’s homes so different, so appealing?*



Mod-style Hearth, 2013

Print on vinyl | 115 x 184 in.



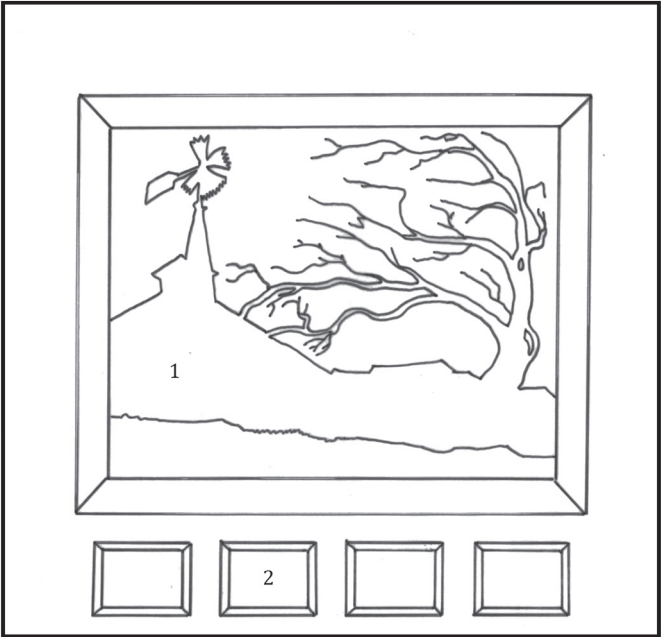
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| 1 Generic abstract sculpture | 8 Blue-and-white Chinese bowl |
| 2 Shadow of generic abstract sculpture | 9 Nautilus shell |
| 3 Overturned striped bag of popcorn | 10 Rooster ³ |
| 4 Transformation of trees into logs, side view ¹ | 11 Reproduction of a watercolor reproduction by Sue Johnson of <i>Wave</i> (1943-44) by British sculptor, Barbara Hepworth |
| 5 Transformation of trees into logs, end view ² | 12 Overall room “look” based on historical sources ⁴ |
| 6 Mid-century modern gravel art, marketed as the “Provincial” still life | |
| 7 Mid-century modern gravel art, marketed as the “Colonial” still life | |

1 For information on this subject, see *Forest and Lumber* by Neil Jenney, painted in 1969.
2 See footnote above.
3 Marx produced what is called the “Rooster Ranch House” with lift-off roof that featured a rooster silhouette on the outside chimney.
4 For more room design ideas like this one see the Marx New Split Level Dollhouse #4861, and *Better Homes & Gardens Decorating Books* (Des Moines: Meredith Publishing Company, 1956) pages 16 and 208.



Picture Window Looking West, 2013

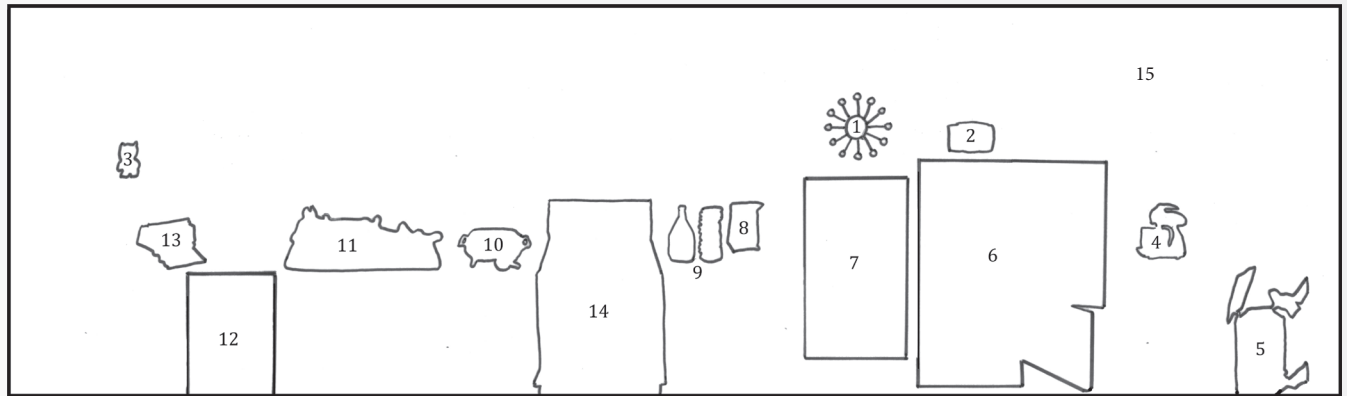
Print on vinyl | 115 x 115 in.



- 1 Substantially enlarged reproduction of *Broken Windmill* (Anonymous, completed paint-by-numbers painting, 18 colors, Craftint, 1956). Provenance: eBay
- 2 Wood paneling as subject

Early Sunday Morning in the Kitchen¹, 2013

Print on vinyl | 115 x 376 in.



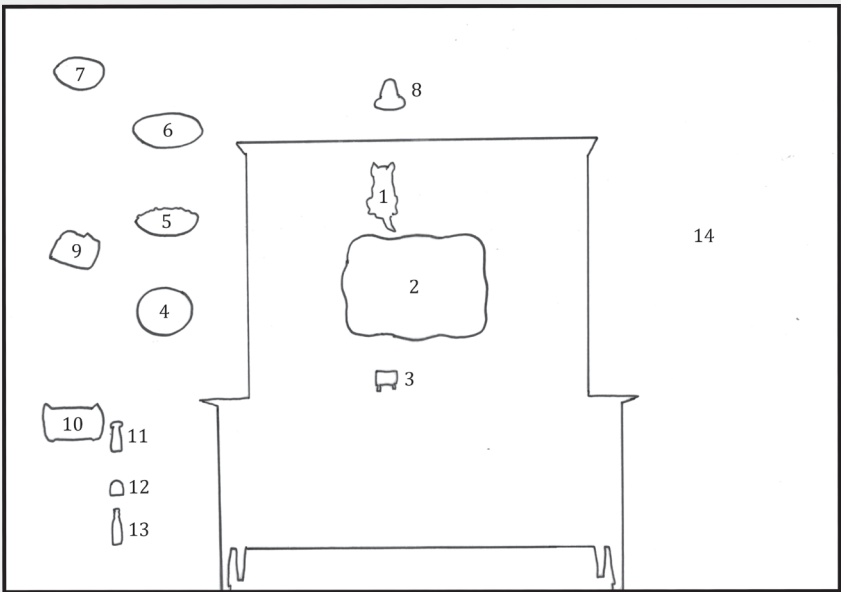
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| 1 | Reproduction of a reproduction of a George Nelson-style ball clock | 7 | Space-Age (built-in see-thru double oven with control panel) |
| 2 | Reproduction of a reproduction of an Aunt Jemima clock | 8 | Convenience (electric can-opener) |
| 3 | Those that, at a distance, resemble collectible cookie jars (from an old auction catalog) ² | 9 | More Abundance (stack of pancakes with syrup) |
| 4 | Streamlined (mixer, there's another in the warehouse for when this one doesn't work anymore) | 10 | Appealing New Gadget (electric skillet) |
| 5 | Cleanliness (spray disinfectant and covered trash can) | 11 | Pre-Modern Way (washing dishes by hand) |
| 6 | Abundance (refrigerator, fully-stocked) | 12 | Hygienic Modern Labor-Saver (dishwasher) |
| | | 13 | Economical Efficiency (meal-sealing-type device) ³ |
| | | 14 | Cheerful Color (turquoise stove and oven combo) |
| | | 15 | "Souvenir" wallpaper pattern ⁴ |

1 Title intended as a reference to Edward Hopper's painting from 1930, *Early Sunday Morning*.
2 An oblique reference to the 1942 essay by Jorge Luis Borges, "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" in which is described a certain fictitious Chinese encyclopedia, *The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*.
3 Reference to Sue Johnson's previous archival project, *The New Ark Preservation Project*, in which cultural objects are sealed in Food Saver brand sealing bags. The project's collection categories include: 1) animals wearing clothes, 2) things that look like other things, and 3) fake food items.
4 Also available as wrapping paper.



Land of Plenty, 2013

Print on vinyl | 115 x 187 in.



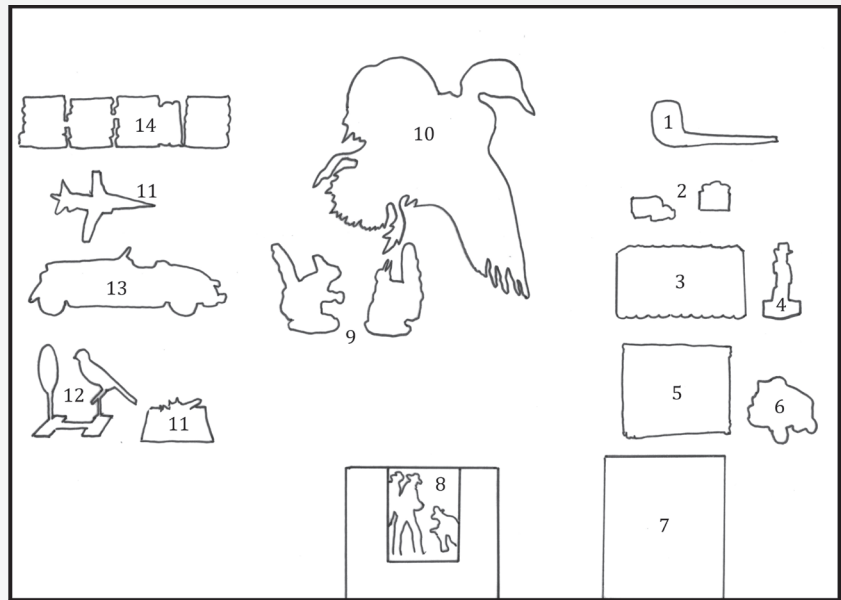
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| 1 | Time-keeping mutant cat | 7 | Big steak |
| 2 | Metal TV tray showcasing Coca-Cola products, circa 1962 | 8 | Fancy gelatin |
| 3 | Salt & pepper shaker in the shape of a wood grain TV set | 9 | Soup & sandwich combo |
| 4 | Smiling Pancakes (friend of Smiling Coffee Pot) | 10 | Meatloaf slathered in ketchup |
| 5 | Hamburger being helped by macaroni | 11 | Atomic-style vessel |
| 6 | Salisbury Steak dinner | 12 | Half-sandwich with bacon |
| | | 13 | No-brand ketchup |
| | | 14 | “Mod-Automat” wallpaper pattern |



The Forest Room, 2013

(Right Wall)

Print on vinyl | 115 x 162 in.



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|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Not a pipe ¹ | | “Round-Up time” during which consumers send in product labels in exchange for valuable product coupons. |
| 2 | Not a matchbox or a car | | |
| 3 | Paper knowledge | | |
| 4 | Uncle Sam look-alike | 9 | Pair of ceramic squirrels |
| 5 | Portrait of the artist with family, circa mid-1960s ² | 10 | Flat version of a flying duck |
| 6 | Miniature tractor | 11 | Two grounded planes |
| 7 | Flat version of a tree | 12 | Avian-type Narcissus |
| 8 | Portal for the Western Wonderland, the view of which looks remarkably similar to a Del Monte advertisement about so-called | 13 | Over-sized dream car |
| | | 14 | Section of 8-track tapes that offered convenience plus portability (popular for use in automobiles) |

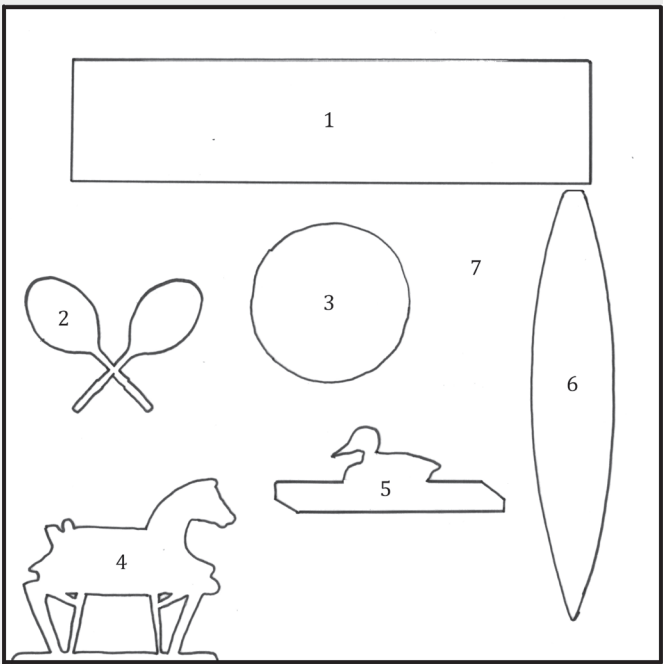
1 An acknowledgment of the importance of Belgian artist, Rene Magritte and his 1928-29 oil on canvas painting, *La trahison des images* (English: The Treachery of Images) that consists of a painted pipe under which the artist wrote “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” (English: This is not a pipe.)
2 Self-explanatory. Though, we can add this picture was taken in Harding, New Jersey, where the family lived in a split-level house. Over the mantle is a black-and-white painting of Monterey, California, which was a favorite family painting since they had just recently relocated from California to New Jersey.



The Forest Room, 2013

(Left Wall)

Print on vinyl | 115 x 115 in.



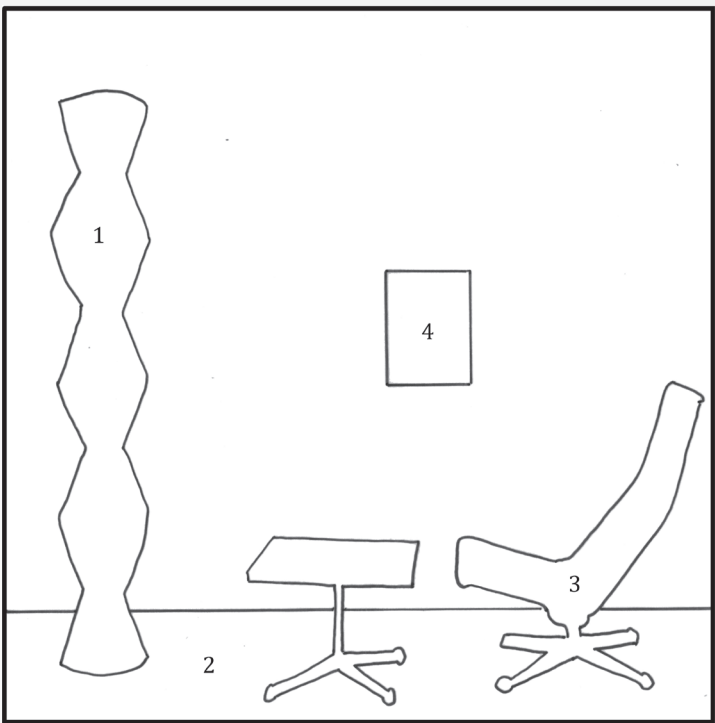
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| 1 | Wooden sign of the American Dream | 5 | Wooden duck decoy |
| 2 | Decorative wooden tennis rackets | 6 | Non-wooden kayak, hanging |
| 3 | Modern dartboard ¹ | 7 | Wooden paneling, diagonally installed |
| 4 | Wooden red spring horse | | |

1 Early games of darts entailed throwing arrows at slices of a tree which had concentric rings already built into their design, or at the bottoms of wooden barrels.

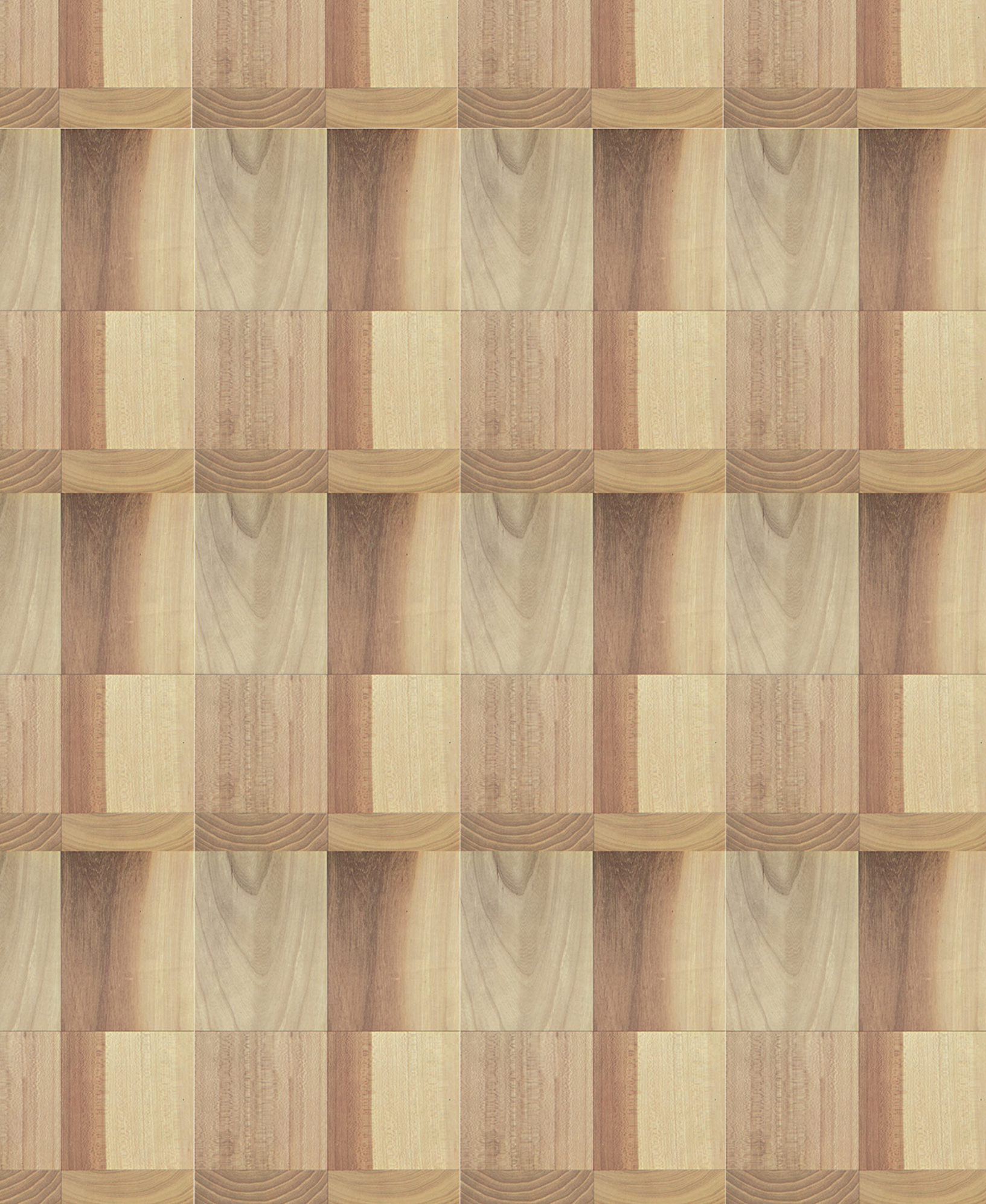


Room with a View of Infinity, 2013

Print on vinyl | 115 x 115 in.



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| 1 | Reproduction of a watercolor painting by Sue Johnson that reproduces <i>Endless Column</i> by Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) from 1918. |
| 2 | Luxurious deep-pile carpet |
| 3 | Black-and-white picture of an Eames-era lounge chair and footrest |
| 4 | Repeat motif (cross sections of two types of wood found in an out-of-date encyclopedia) used to create the wallpaper pattern, “Woody.” |



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Artwork, text, and drawings by Sue Johnson unless otherwise noted; All works in the exhibition courtesy of the artist.

For more information about works by Sue Johnson, please visit www.suejohnson1.com

Designer: Gabby Windham



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Fogelman Galleries of
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