

HIDE 'N SEEK

WORK BY
PAT KECK



PUCKER GALLERY
Boston

A TRIBUTE TO PAT KECK

How best to think about the astonishing art created meticulously by Pat Keck? How to describe why we are attracted to her art? Authenticity is the word that comes to mind. There is no attempt to surprise or shock or preach. Each work simply (or not so simply) appears in Pat's imagination and calls to her to be born.

She carefully amasses and crafts every element—from tiny screws to handsewn costumes, a collection of watches to strange hairdos. All are a piece of the intricate creating of each unique sculpture. There is no compromise as her vision is exactly made. Then, we are astonished when the work appears.

There is a magical aspect to the completed work that belies the technical aspects of its making. We can only applaud quietly when confronted with the absolute discovery of each new Pat Keck creation. We await with excitement for the next surprise, lingering around the bend.

Thank you to the wizard of our imagination, Pat Keck.

— BERNIE AND SUE PUCKER

PAT KECK

Pat Keck earned a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1978. She was a founding member of the World Sculpture Racing Society and winner of the World's First Sculpture Race in Cambridge, MA. In 2004, she was featured in the PBS series *Art Close Up*, and in 2005 she collaborated with Molasses Tank Productions in *Acts of Futility*, a staging of six one-act plays by Samuel Beckett. From 2010 to 2019, she created the sets and marionettes for the short film *Night and Day* by Peter Anthony, which screened at various film festivals in 2020. Keck's works are included in several public collections, including the Addison Gallery of American Art, the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the Fogg Museum, the Boston Public Library, the New York Public Library, Fidelity Investments, Wellington Management Company, the Davison Art Center, and the Art Complex Museum.



MAN KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS (MKET)

This idea has been percolating in my head for a long time. It came from one of Buster Keaton's last films, called *Film* (with a script by Samuel Beckett), which ends with a shot of him in a rocking chair, silently rocking until he dozes off. I often get the comment that all my faces have the same deadpan look. This is because I love Buster Keaton. While he was called The Great Stone Face, to me he was wonderfully expressive, and his features are impossible to improve upon. So, I go back to them time and again. In *Film*, Keaton wears an eyepatch, which I intended to give my figure. But I still wanted him to have an eye under the patch, where it should be, so I painted it like a blind eye but didn't hook it up to the mechanism that closes the other eye. As I worked on him that eye was always on me. I liked that and it gave me my title.

Cover:
MAN KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS (MKET), 2020
Mixed media construction
57 x 15 x 15" (seated figure 19")
PK25

Click [HERE](#) for a video of this work in motion!

GHOST ELEVATOR

I got the idea for this piece years ago but at least had enough sense to know back then that it was way beyond my capabilities. Now that I have more confidence, I proposed three ideas to my brother to choose from. None of them was going to happen without his help, so it seemed only fair to let him pick. Ghosts have been subjects of mine before. I like the contradiction of building a ghost out of wood and the thought that it would need a mechanical means of levitating really appealed to me. The elevator doors were one of the biggest hurdles. One of the many things I neglected to think about was that three shafts and three floors meant nine doors, which in turn each have about a squillion tiny parts. I have heard that the real secret of magicians is that no one would believe the lengths they are willing to go through to create an illusion. That was the thought that helped me see this piece through to the end.

GHOST ELEVATOR, 2020
Mixed media construction
94 x 46 x 22"
PK24

Click [HERE](#) for a video of this work in motion!
Click [HERE](#) for another video!



ABOUT MY PRINTS:

I learned to make woodblock prints by making Christmas cards, starting when I got out of college in 1978. Very much like my sculptures, each one was a learning experience for the next. In 1994, when I had my first solo show in Boston, my dealer suggested I do something “like your Christmas cards” for the show announcement. From then on, I would do a print that related to the work for each show.

Sometimes imagery was taken from the working drawings for the pieces (as in *Man Who Changed His Mind*), other times they were mash-ups of related pieces (as in *Punish/Reward*), or sometimes they were stand-alone pieces (as in *Puppet Theater*, *Fortune*). The *Dummies Logbook* is a series of four works which came out of a collaboration with the poet Mark DeCarteret. He would send me a poem inspired by my work, I would send him an image conjured by his poem, and the prints were based on the postcards we mailed back and forth.

Because my sculptures take so much time, I really enjoy the relative instant gratification of printmaking. But the discoveries along the way are the best part. I noticed when I was cleaning up, trying to get the last bit of ink off, I would get these great faint images. I started experimenting with layering to get multiple shades of gray using varying amounts of black ink. This technique turned out to be tailor-made for doing prints of the ghosts in the *Ghost Elevator*, for which the barest smidgen of ink achieved an appropriately ghostly image.

— PAT KECK



ELEVATING GHOST #2, 2020
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
image: 4 x 6"; paper: 6 x 8"
PK32



ELEVATING GHOST #1, 2020
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
image: 4 x 6"; paper: 6 x 8"
PK31



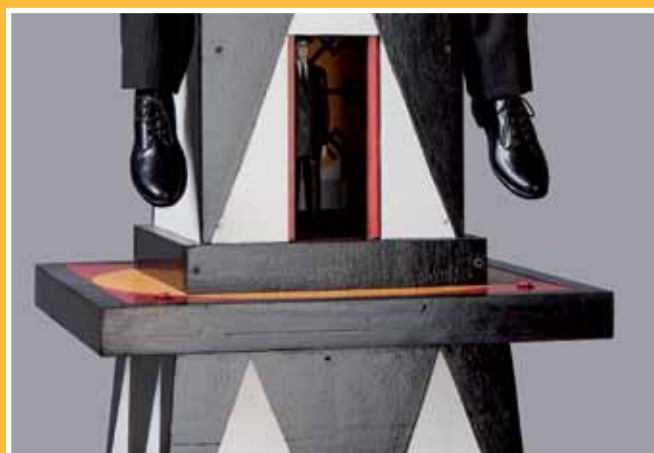
ELEVATING GHOST #3, 2020
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
image: 4 x 6"; paper: 6 x 8"
PK33



TRICKY MAN

I love magicians and illusionists and enjoy experimenting with the techniques magicians employ. Oftentimes when you learn how a trick is done, it turns out to be quite simple. I began with wanting to make a figure vanish. It took a long time to work out the mechanism, but once I did, what I had was a box with a little man who was either there or not there, which really was not very interesting. So the fellow on top, despite dominating the piece, was a bit of an afterthought. He needed a reason for being there, so I made him do the magic by knocking on the box to make the guy inside appear or disappear.

TRICKY MAN, 2011
Mixed media construction
80 x 20 x 20"
PK20





COIN-OPERATED HYPNOTIST

My work has long been a family affair. My dad was a mechanical engineer who taught me everything he could and helped me build things I would have been totally incapable of on my own. This is the first piece I built after he died. As simple as it is, I had to call on almost everything he taught me. In engineering, the first thing you learn is that nothing is ever simple. I wanted to have the action triggered by a coin dropping in, but the forces involved in moving the arm over are substantial and a quarter rolling into the lever just bounced off it. A friend of mine who builds automata told me that in coin-operated pieces, the coin itself does not initiate the action, it is the mechanism that pushes the coin in. He had a book with lovely illustrations of those mechanisms. My dad always told me: “don’t reinvent the wheel if you don’t have to.”

COIN-OPERATED HYPNOTIST
Mixed media construction
75 x 15.5 x 14"
PK22



MAN WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON HIS HANDS

After my parents died, I discovered they each had a drawer full of a lifetime's worth of dysfunctional watches. I imagined a Marley-like figure, dragging a chain of watches. When my horologist friend, Bob Frishman, asked me if he could borrow one of my time-related pieces for the Horology in Art symposium he was hosting in Boston, I told him my idea. Next day

he arrived on my doorstep with a shoebox full of dead watches so that I could really load the figure down. It was hard to keep track, but the construction has over 70 timepieces on him. As the piece evolved, he started looking less burdened and more empowered by all the watches, like a Time Lord. So instead of Jacob Marley he ended up looking more like Dr. Who.

MAN WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON HIS HANDS, 2017
Mixed media construction
66 x 23 x 23"
PK16



ACHING HEAD

I found this wonderful fireplace tool in our garage and thought it would be a great prop for a guardian-like figure. When it felt a bit shorter than I would have liked, I had the idea that if the figure were small, the fork would look bigger. It still needed some height so I decided a big head would make a good pedestal for it. It started out having a neck but as I was working on it, the head sitting on the floor looking up at me was much more compelling than having it stare out into space. I have made moving eyes many times but never with independent eyelids (blinkers, I learned they're called). It seemed a good chance to try it out on a manageable scale. My brother (who, as a friend puts it, "puts the voodoo in" all my animated pieces), and I had just begun using motion detectors in my work and I loved the way they seemed to react on their own to what was going on around them. This time, it's sound that triggers the response.

ACHING HEAD, 2018
Mixed media construction
82.25 x 22.25 x 22.25"
PK23





MANTICORE

Manticores are one of the lesser known mythical beasts. They are described as having the head of a man, the body of a lion, and the tail of a scorpion, but what really appealed to me (at least in the illustration in my bestiary) was that it had 3 sets of teeth. While my recent figures have more inscrutable expressions, earlier pieces often bared their teeth and wore ear to ear grins. Manticore too is kind of inscrutable, until you push the lever in his belly and he reveals his true nature.



MANTICORE, 1986
Mixed media construction
84 x 24 x 24"
PK30 (LF)



SPINNING DIZZY MAN

This piece was inspired by a book of turntable illusions. There was a hole in the center of the book so you could put it on your record player (I'm dating myself here) and get different optical effects. I was playing around with my collection of assorted gears and discovered that I could double the effect by having one disc revolve within another. His outfit was inspired by the Fellini film *8½*, which has a still of a guy parading around in long johns and a tailcoat. That seemed about right for a dizzy man.

SPINNING DIZZY MAN, 2005
Motorized mixed media construction
57 x 18 x 18"
PK13

Click [HERE](#) for a video of this work in motion!





PUPPET THEATER, 2003
Mixed media construction
89 x 33 x 33"
PK29

PUPPET THEATER

I love all things theatrical, and what is going on backstage has a particular fascination. This piece may very well have been inspired by the famous line in the *Wizard of Oz*: "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." It took off from there. My love of theater

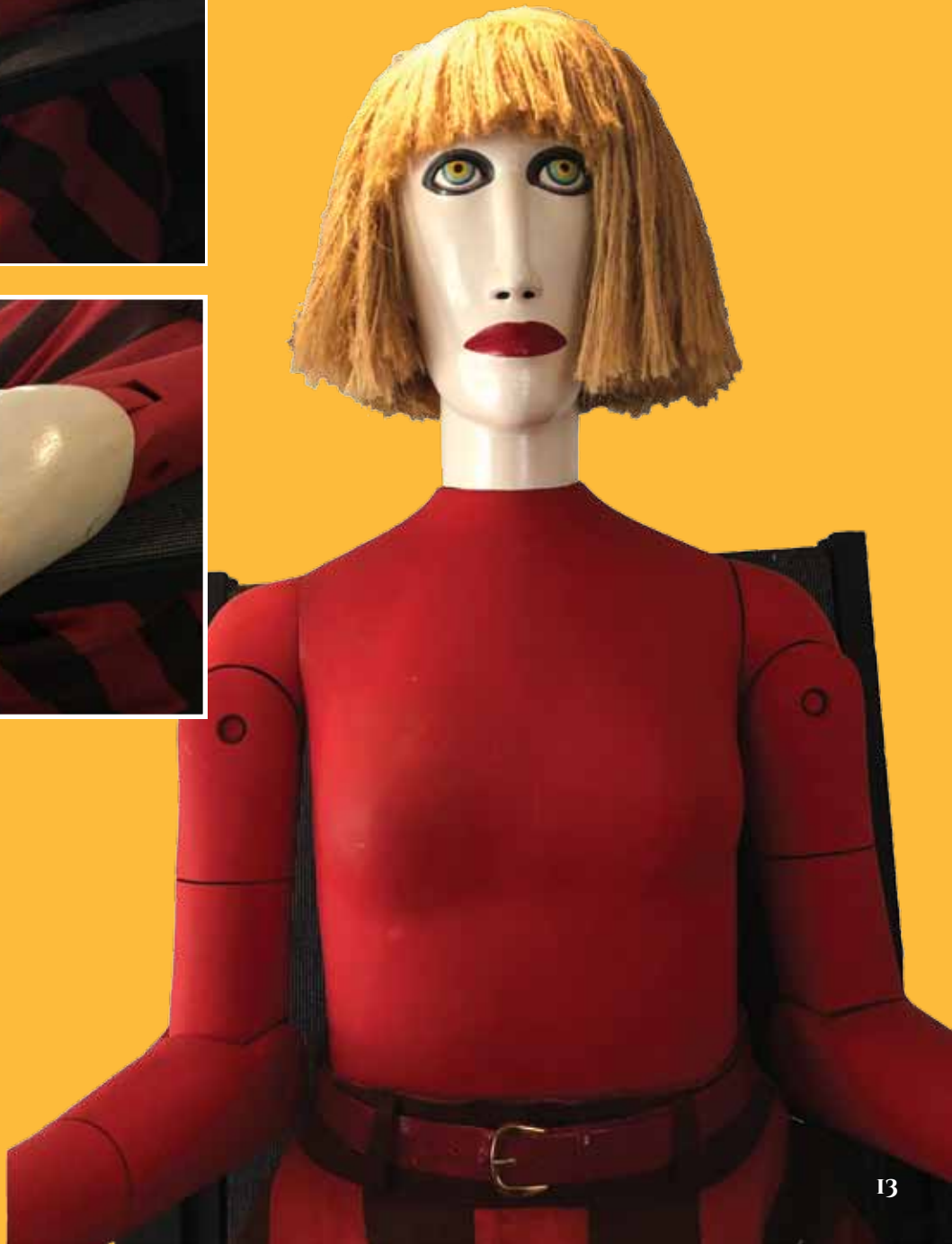
does not extend to any desire to be onstage. I share with many people the nightmare of suddenly and unexpectedly finding myself before an audience. This phobia led to dressing the central figure in pajamas and giving him a deer-in-the-headlights expression.



SEATED GIANTESS, 1992
Mixed media construction
96 x 44 x 66"
PK28

SEATED GIANTESS

Every so often I find myself with some really big pieces of wood, so the only thing to do is make something really big. While most of my figures have an androgynous look, few are obviously female. By way of compensation when I do make an obviously female figure, I often make her really big. This one can trace her roots to the giantess Mrs. Yoop in the *Tin Woodman of Oz*, and the one in *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*. Both attractive women but scary because they could walk on you and you would die.

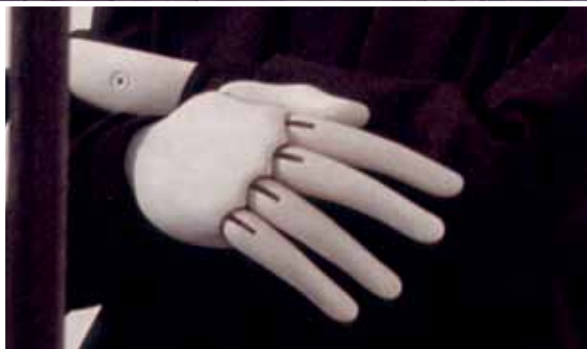


MESSENGERS

Another common kind of automaton is the fortune teller. I wanted to make one that would type out fortunes while you waited but could not work out a way of doing it. One night, watching the show *Morse* on TV, I realized the music for the end credits was the name Morse being spelled out in Morse code. And I thought—that I could do! As is often the case, it got way out of hand when I decided it didn't make sense to have just one telegraph operator, and it would be boring if they all worked the same way. My dad helped me with the mechanics while my brother, in faraway Rochester, NY, clued us in to the wonders of servo motors and micro switches. He'd come home at holiday times and string miles of wire through the thing. I was collecting messages for it and emailing them to him to be coded. I asked what the capacity would be based on what I had already sent. He said about 3,000. I spent two weeks in the library doing nothing but search for messages. I didn't make it to 3,000 but there are over 1,000 messages programmed in.

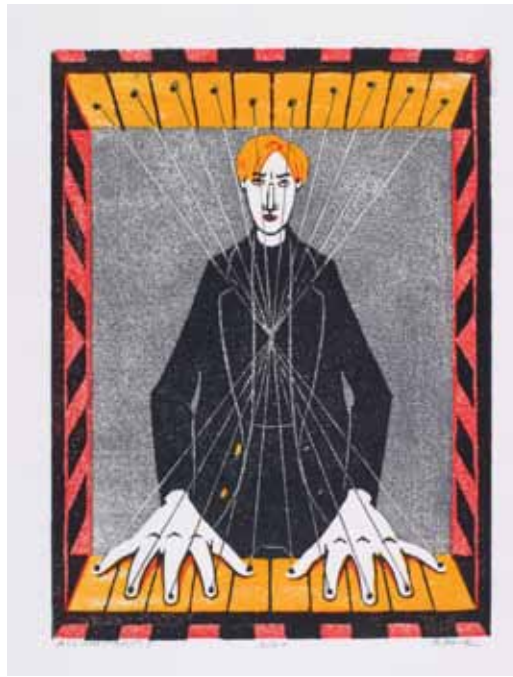
MESSENGERS, 2001
Mixed media construction
85 x 60 x 30"
PK26

Click [HERE](#) for a video of this work in motion!





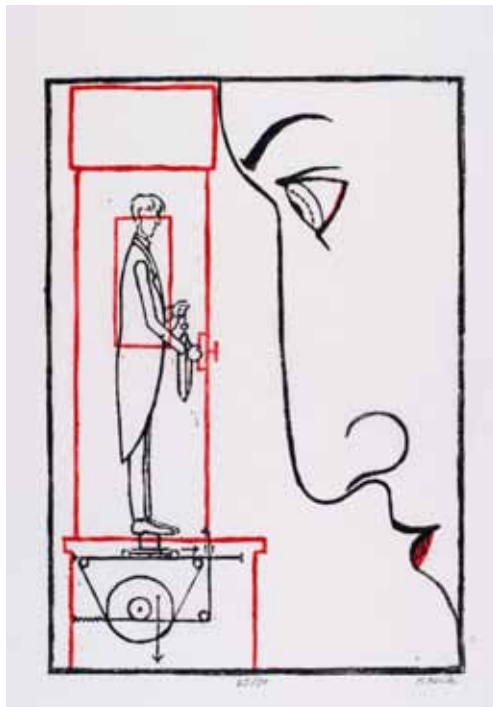
PUPPET THEATER (TRIPTYCH), 2004
 Woodblock print on rice paper in hand-painted frame
 Edition of 30
 29 x 15.75"
 PK14



ACCOMPANIST, 1998
 Woodblock print on rice paper
 Edition of 50
 10 x 8" paper, 8 x 6" image
 PK4



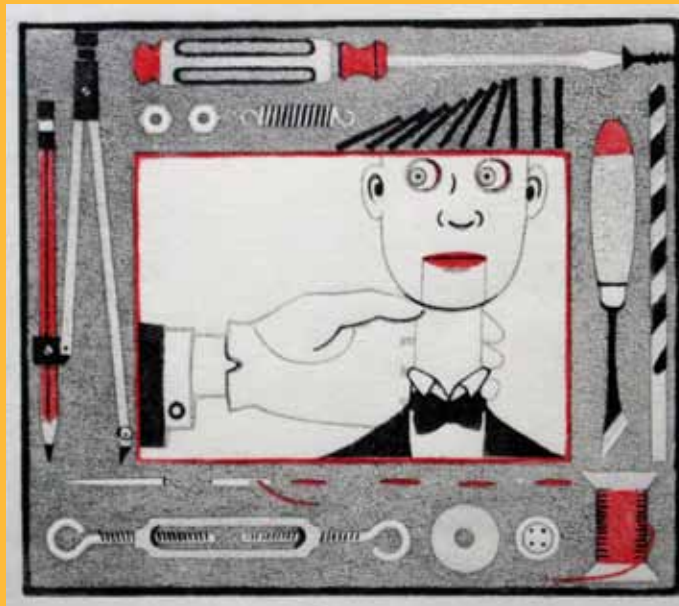
MESSAGE, 2000
 Woodblock print on rice paper
 Edition of 50
 12.25 x 10" paper, 9.75 x 7.5" image
 PK5



UNTITLED, 1994
 Woodblock print on rice paper
 Edition of 50
 12 x 9" paper, 8.75 x 6.25" image
 PK1



FORTUNE, 2008
 Woodblock print on rice paper with custom frame
 Edition of 50
 14.25 x 12.25" paper; 10.75 x 10.75" image
 PK7



DUMMY'S LOGBOOK (ACT III), 2012
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
9 x 12" paper, 8 x 9.25" image
PK10



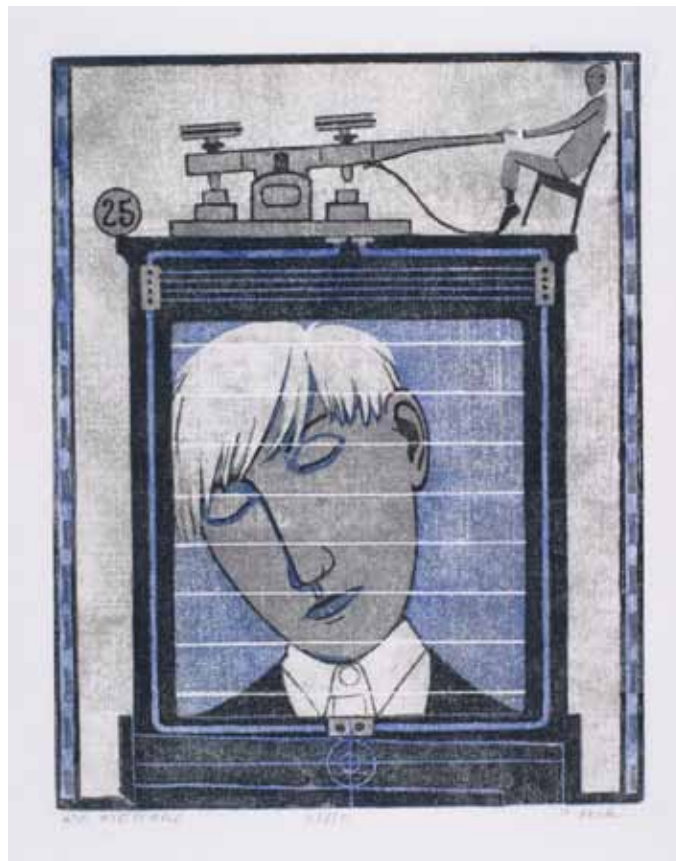
DUMMY'S LOGBOOK (ACT IV), 2013
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
12.25 x 9" paper, 10.5 x 7" image
PK11



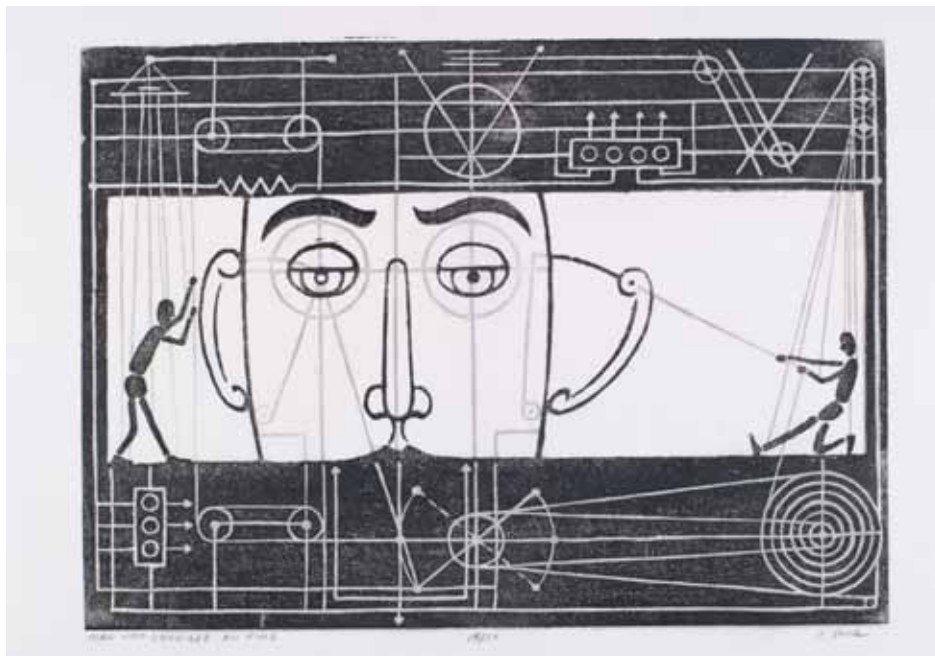
DUMMY'S LOGBOOK (ACT II), 2012
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
12.25 x 8.25" paper, 7.25 x 5.5" image
PK9



MAN GETTING AWAY WITH SOMETHING, 1997
Woodblock print on rice paper
Edition of 50
13.25 x 11.25" paper, 11 x 9.5" image
PK3



NO MESSAGE, 2000
 Woodblock print on rice paper
 Edition of 50
 12.5 x 10.5" paper, 9.75 x 7.5" image
 PK6



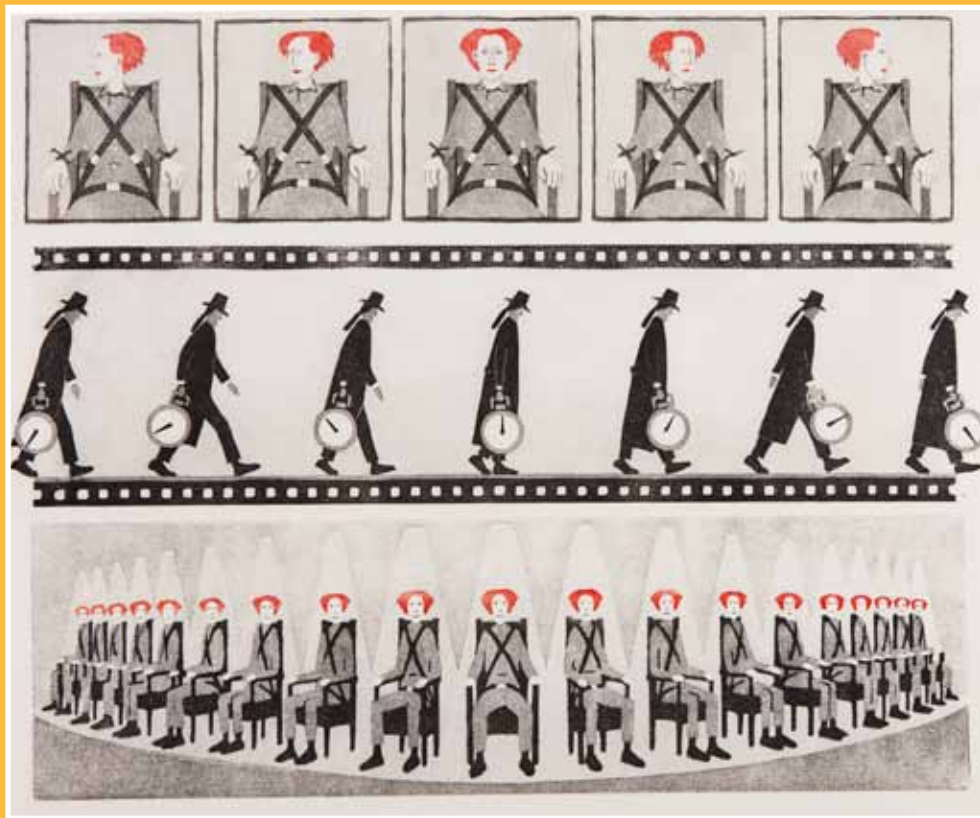
MAN WHO CHANGED HIS MIND, 1995
 Woodblock print on rice paper
 Edition of 50
 9.5 x 12" paper, 7.5 x 10.25" image
 PK2

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DATES: 21 NOVEMBER 2020 THROUGH 10 JANUARY 2021

ONLINE EVENTS: Please visit www.puckergallery.com for a list of virtual gatherings and events accompanying *Hide 'N Seek*.



TIME AND MOTION, 2018
Woodblock print on mulberry paper
Edition of 50
15.75 x 18"
PK19

PUCKER GALLERY

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GALLERY HOURS:

Monday through Saturday
10:00 AM to 5:30 PM
Sunday 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM

We are open to all and taking the necessary precautions for visitor and staff safety. We welcome appointments to maximize visitor experience.

Pucker Gallery is a member of the Boston Art Dealers Association and the New England Appraisers Association.

CREDITS:

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PUCKER
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GALLERY

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