

jane gilmor

BREAKFAST  
ON PLUTO





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# Welcome to Pandemic Planet

Vanessa Sage

"In these layered worlds of chance encounters and in the face of a pandemic and dire planetary emergencies, I look for those slippages of visual language, materiality, and place through which we relocate our 'selves.'"

Jane Gilmor, 2021.

At the core of Jane Gilmor's artwork is how we navigate being human and how that humanity is made manifest in objects and language. For over five decades, she has explored, poked, and prodded the human condition with wit and verve. In the installation *Breakfast on Pluto* at the Figge Art Museum, Gilmor uses found materials and repurposed artwork "mined" from the recesses of her studio to assemble sculptures with layers of personal and cultural meaning. Recent events including the pandemic, societal unrest, and environmental instability have seeped into her artistic practice, as they have into all aspects of our lives. Gilmor's bizarre constructions encourage us to contemplate the relationship between the familiar and the strange, between light and darkness, and between the past and the present. Her work lives and thrives in the liminal space "in between."

Gilmor states of her recent series of sculptures, "... I wanted to work more intuitively from the objects and materials I already had ...looking for new references or meanings or connections in unexpected juxtapositions of old stuff." While some elements are intentional cultural references, the outside world often inserts itself in unconscious and surprising ways. For example, Gilmor was experimenting with the pink fabric ball atop her sculpture *Breakfast on Pluto* (p. 4) as COVID-19 steadily coursed across the globe. She soon realized that the germ creeping onto airplanes and across oceans had infiltrated her work, taking the form of a pink plush that resembles a stuffed toy. Gilmor recalled, "One day I walked into my studio and just started laughing. There was the Coronavirus developing before my eyes in the corner of my studio."

Her delight at this manifestation reveals an essential part of her practice: humor. It is ever-present and off-beat, stirring smiles and side-eyed glances between those walking among her sculptures. Gilmor has stated that "humor is the route to everything." So while they may be comic, compelling dialogues on our society and culture underpin each work.



In addition to fabricating new elements, past artwork is given fresh context within the installation. In *Fatigue*, Gilmor re-deploys a 2004 performance video featuring a close-up of herself as she winces and moans in exhaustion (p. 6). The monitor is set above and behind three deformed candles while an absurdly fluffy tulle prom skirt is mounted above. *Fatigue* looks over the rest of the works in the installation, embodying the sense of exhaustion and isolation that we all felt during quarantine as it surveys the works Gilmor created during that time.

The namesake of the exhibition, *Breakfast on Pluto* and its counterpart, *Dinner on the Dark Side* take center stage in the Figge's Katz gallery. *Breakfast on Pluto* is draped in soft white mosquito netting while *Dinner on the Dark Side* is shrouded in black. Crowning

both works are fabric puff balls in the shape of the now-familiar spiked COVID-19 micro-organism. They both spin slowly, powered by jewelry display motors. By transforming the virus into rotating plushes, Gilmor makes something terrifying seem disarmingly humorous. These two works, with their biomechanical innards and soft exterior shells, are unsettlingly ambiguous. Do they have good intentions or bad? Are they here to destroy us or do they come in peace? Rather than being simply one thing or the other, they demonstrate that things, and people, are complex. Something fluffy and pink can also be threatening, just as the boundaries between good and bad, or masculine and feminine, are flexible rather than fixed. Through her deliberate juxtaposition of materials, Gilmor plays with and re-orient's our cultural preconceptions.

Each work in the installation is energized by the materials used in their construction and the connections that Gilmor makes between them. Personal relics and past artwork commingle with knick-knacks discovered by friends at thrift shops. The petticoat sitting on *Breakfast on Pluto* is from Gilmor's childhood, while the gawking tiger portrait in *Invasive Species* (p. 36) was a gift from her friend and fellow artist Barry Sigel. A vintage Christmas decoration used as the roof for *Pitiful* (p. 26) was discovered on Jane's front lawn one fateful morning—an object that found her rather than the other way around. Gilmor weaves stories by bringing these





objects together as she searches "for some unspoken connection in these collisions of images and voices..."

Among the most intriguing are the stories viewers construct as they interact with the works—the "unspoken connections" we make for ourselves. The sculptures encourage us to use our imagination and points of reference to try to make sense of them. Perhaps *Breakfast on Pluto* reminds you of Sci-Fi television—like a clunky Robby the Robot or Dalek made of spare parts salvaged from a wrecked spaceship. Or the tulle skirt in *Fatigue* brings back childhood memories of an uncomfortable crinoline that you hated to wear. The works compel us to examine each of their elements and to examine ourselves.

In addition to viewers projecting their own meanings onto her work, over the course of her career Gilmor has invited a variety of people to collaborate with her. She began these community-based projects in the 1980s by working with disenfranchised individuals to humanize societal issues like homelessness. During the workshops, Gilmor encouraged participants from homeless shelters to close their eyes and think about a memory or dream of a place they could "call home." They would then transcribe their responses onto thin sheets of metal and fill those impressions with black ink. These graven responses have an aesthetic weight underscoring the significance of the memories and dreams contained within them.

Gilmor created room-sized installations and temple-like structures coated in the works on metal created during various workshops. These installations allowed people to connect with the personal perspectives of those experiencing homelessness, poverty, or illness. Of these projects Gilmor stated, "...while the workshops and installations were intended to give public voice to the disenfranchised, both within their communities and beyond, they also encouraged the use of imagination as a survival tool." Her collaborative work in this vein continues in the community project, "Pandemic Planet" developed with the Figge education team.

Coinciding with the exhibition, the community project "Pandemic Planet" is intended to give our community the opportunity to share



and process their experiences during quarantine. At public workshops and outreach sessions, participants use the same tooling process that Gilmor has employed in previous workshops. They are asked to “Close your eyes and remember.... Remember a space (real or imagined) where you spent lots of time during the pandemic quarantines. What do you see in this space? Is it bright or dark? Quiet or noisy? Did you feel calm or anxious in this space?” The act of remembering, imagining, and translating into a design or writing allows them to, as Gilmor puts it, use “imagination as a coping mechanism — and a way to reorient, rethink, and process.”

The works on metal created during these workshops cover the exterior of a small structure housed in the Figge studios. Gilmor conceptualized the exterior of this structure as a way for people to connect with the experiences of others and the interior as an intimate space for contemplation (see inset). With one entry point, the dark interior is punctuated by a pattern of light coming through holes piercing the domed roof. Gilmor describes it as being similar to a planetarium, “... to enter the dark interior where a pattern of lights gives a feeling of the larger universe and a broader experience of the past year—as just that—past and a small part of the cosmos.”

Jane Gilmor’s tireless experimentation and constant re-working of her past artwork demonstrates that her creative process is never finished. Her work continues to change



and evolve. And while Gilmor encourages us to think about our society and culture, including global crises and inequities, she also shows what can be built from those experiences. As she states, “The electricity is still on. Yes, there must be life!” We are honored to exhibit Gilmor’s work at the Figge Art Museum, giving our community the chance to laugh, connect, contemplate, and heal at a time when it is especially vital to do so.



The story of physical migration  
is not my story. I have no amazing  
tales of walking across the desert to  
reunite with family. I can't tell you  
what it's like to visit dozens of countries  
I have no knowledge of the smell of  
local foods cooking half way around  
the world. I live in an elect-  
ronic landscape - in an electro-  
nic land of anonymous identities,  
- of anonymous identities,

# ELEVATOR











# Breakfast on Pluto: An Installation

Joy Sperling

"We'll journey to Mars and visit the stars,  
Finding our Breakfast on Pluto.  
Go anywhere without leaving your chair and  
let your thoughts run free,  
Living within all the dreams you can spin,  
there is so much to see."

Don Partridge, and Alan Young 1969.

Jane Gilmor's installation, *Breakfast on Pluto*, asks viewers to consider how we perceive the world; to ask how points of view or attitudes are normalized or undermined; to consider both the positive and (especially in light of 2020) potentially catastrophic impacts of the "viral spread" of ideas, issues, and even disease. Gilmor, a foundational figure in the women's art movement and a longstanding national contributor to the visual-critical and community-based discourse in art, speaks eloquently about her own art: "For the past forty years my practice has been concerned with social issues, cultural phenomenon, chance situations, and psychological narrative. I look for those slippages and entanglements of object, language, and place through which we locate our own identity. Most of my sculptures and installations explore dislocation and border crossings: presence/absence, public/private, male/female, poverty/

privilege." In *Breakfast on Pluto*, she challenges us to consider the inherent contradictions and uncertainties of situations. Things are rarely as simple as they seem, and meanings and identities are frequently fragile, contingent, and unstable.

The centerpiece of this exhibition is a pair of appositional, internally lit, seven-foot-tall sculptures resembling abstracted figures (p. 4-5). Each is surmounted by a large formal shade, like a royal Indian chhatra covered by a long translucent veil that falls to the ground and is topped by a giant rotating, fuzzy fabric likeness of a coronavirus. In the dramatically spot-lit *Breakfast on Pluto*, the several "corona" shapes sprout like friendly pink pom-poms from a still-growing viral form perched on a perky, diaphanous-tulle foofaraw (p. 18). Below, a generous white net veil tumbles over the frame, a slender gold metal interior, and a pleated metal skirt base, to gather voluminously on the floor giving the whole sculpture a bright, generous, and rather sparkly persona. *Dinner on the Dark Side* is more funereal by comparison. Its restrained black tulle netting drapes like a veiled Victorian mourning hat from a now fully developed spiked-virus to a dark peplum base. Only the interior shrine of





this structure is illuminated, suggesting a more inwardly directed contemplation, a greater sense of isolation, and an emotional retrenchment. And yet, both sculptures are shades of the same story: both are ambivalent and wistful, both are filled with sweet fantasies, and both pull at us with undertows and eddies of laughter and dread.

*Breakfast on Pluto* refers to the 2005 film starring Cillian Murphy based on Patrick McCabe's novel that, in turn, used a stanza from the 1969 Don Partridge and Alan Young song as an epigraph. The film traces the emotional fantasy world that a gentle, young, and rural Irish trans-woman skips in-and-out of to help make sense of an inhospitable and harsh reality where she has no fixed place, parentage, or identity. Her "Breakfast on Pluto" world is fabulous, pretty, and glamorous but is also riven by anxiety, deep anguish, and incipient danger. Gilmor's *Breakfast* and *Dinner* capture this duality exquisitely, and they raise several other issues that run through the entire exhibition.

As Gilmor says, her work "bounces off" the culture around her. These and other pieces in the show are especially timely. She suggests that we consider the current critical questions about the unstable and intersectional issues of ethnicity, race, gender, class, and religion, as well as our ability to defend against new and potentially deadly viruses. She posits that simple binary oppositional explanations to the fast moving, quickly morphing questions we face today are insufficient, because even the questions, never



mind the answers, are like her sculptures, always changing in meaning before our eyes. And so, Gilmor confounds us. Once we think we find a strand of meaning in one object, another strand emerges, and another, forcing us to constantly update and revise our assumptions to the degree that extended study of her installations always reveals something new, and sometimes threatens to overwhelm us with the complex layers of meaning packed skillfully into a superficially simple work of art.

*Breakfast* and *Dinner* are such works. They both present a cornucopia of visual pleasures: both speak of a fragile, romantic, glittering world in which the disempowered are empowered, and yet embody the elements



of disaster, of disillusionment, and of defeat. They not only reveal that identity, gender, and life itself are fluid, impermanent, and contingent, but that instability is the new norm in contemporary society.

In *Pandemic Planet*, Gilmore also amplifies the sense of isolation and contamination, but she blends it with a brilliantly subtle critique of colonialism and xenophobia (p. 19). *Pandemic Planet* is a twenty-five-inch-tall broken spherical plaster structure that could be read as a space helmet with a silver webbed interior, a reinforced exterior metal frame, and an attached pink fabric trachea-like breathing tube. Or, it could be alternatively read as a shiny spider-webbed, foil-lined embryonic form, embedded with a clutch of tiny flesh-colored eggs, from which a fleshy umbilicus is extended. On one hand, *Pandemic Planet* seems like a strangely clinical, but oddly feminized

pink remnant of some culture's attempt to colonize space. Or it might allude to the remnants of an entire "pandemic" world, or perhaps it is simply some abandoned, failed PPE. Contrariwise, the ruffled pink ova might be ready to spring to life as a new species, a new world, a new planet, with new ethnicities, new identities, and new ways of perceiving the world. Then again, it might be a malign alien species hell-bent on our destruction. Viewed in combination with all the other pinks in this show—none of which are quite the same color or texture but all of which are richly decorative and many of which vibrate, writhe, hum, or moan erotically—*Pandemic Planet's* mismatched pinks surprise us, unsettle us, and knock us off-balance. Gilmore presents us with the possibility of a future that is complicated. Throughout her work pink can be prettily pink or organic and meaty; difficult and fraught or fresh and new; or all of the above. But it is very, very present.

In *Pitiful* and *Pathetic*, Jane Gilmore actually reifies the act of complicating meanings in her art (p. 24-27). Both *Pitiful* and *Pathetic* are in fact "repurposed" sculptures and the products of Gilmore's conceptual wizardry. Unlike the "found" or "recycled" objects familiarly used by many artists, she has "repurposed," recontextualized, and reimagined entire works of art, giving them alternative "purposes" and thus vast new complicated layers of meaning. She describes how this came about: "Mining 40 years of unfinished works and collected materials my studio has



recently become an archeological site. I've set out to re-purpose the sluggish build-up—to shake things up.” In the “shakeup” Gilmor reveals the wry, feminist-inflected subversions of gendered meaning in both *Pathetic* and *Pitiful* as the two pieces now converse with one another in the gallery. *Pathetic* is a balletic constructivist parody in which an elegant wooden arc rises over a black wall pulled taut by an industrial rope (p. 25). The machinist aesthetic is undermined completely by two perky pink ticking-covered pillows stuffed into one side of the structure, the attachment of a white plastic frying pan mold (with eggs), the fake knight's helmet attached with a stick, and several barely rotating knobs that pop out periodically from holes in a black polka-dotted wall to give the piece a funny, chaotic, domestic flavor. Similarly, while *Pitiful* looks like some kind of furnace or washer at first glance, we see through a slightly open door (decorated by a huge flaccid muslin penis) two spot-lit shelves with crocheted doilies on them, betraying that we have been looking at a pie cooler all along (p. 26). The top is a scabrously decorated Styrofoam pyramidal Christmas cake edged with pleated metal, cotton balls, and topped with yuletide plastic reindeer. A huge cutout metal snowflake on the floor outside underscores the Christmas theme, and an old neck massager covered with a rectangular lace doily meanders lethargically around the feet of gallery visitors. In concert, *Pathetic* and *Pitiful* create a lazy, yet charged, tragic-comedic scene that again



plays on the instability of gendered definitions and relations. Here Gilmor collapses gender, art world, and domestic pretensions to reveal their inherent individual and collective fragilities, but she does it with such gentle mischief and such deep humanity that we leave this work with an abiding affection for her ditzzy little doily as it circles our feet looking for the meaning in life.



*A Semester at Sea* (p. 33) is a large complex work comprised of an open hexagonal “container” focusing on a seven-foot fabric-covered wall that is penetrated by three slowly pulsating neck massagers whose movements are eroticized by the moans of the nearby piece, *Fatigue* (p. 6). Part of its exterior is tiled with text covered metal panels and its interior is decorated with a Balinese painted scroll (gift of Barry Sigel). On the interior floor a soft pink bulbous “growth” vibrates sporadically beneath a tenuously suspended, solid metal plumb-bob (p. 21). Heading toward this, from the end of a twelve-foot

plank covered-in and surrounded-by yards of roiling, tufted-pink velvet waves, sails a four-foot tall, internally lit, replica of Christopher Columbus’ flagship, the *Santa María*. The ship was built for students at a local elementary school by Mr. Smith, their custodian. It took him two years of smoking then gluing hundreds of burnt matchsticks together to construct (p. 32).

The overt narrative in this large piece is again ambivalent: on one level it might allude to the search for a “new world”, a utopian new beginning. But the work also speaks of colonization (of peoples and places, bodies and minds), migrations, border-crossings, power and privilege, and domination and resistance. It interrogates how histories and narratives are written and how they work to encode and concretize certain origin stories in the human mind. And yet, to paraphrase the lyrics of the “Breakfast on Pluto” song, as armchair tourists we have the ability to travel anywhere in our minds, to change the stories of the past and present; as travelers we can rewrite history from any perspective we wish. Gilmore changes the color of the ocean to pink, Mr. Smith changed *Santa María*’s material from teak to matchsticks, and colonial history to the history of conquest can be reimagined from the perspective of the defeated and colonized. New migration narratives can be constructed as a “Semester at Sea,” as “edutainment,” as superficial and self-serving, or as grim and self-reflexive as any of us would want to face. Gilmore shows



us some migration stories (selected from her community workshops) incised on metal exterior tile that evince the many ways in which we imagine ourselves as-and-in America. And she encourages us to rethink our own stories and how we have made them. One respondent describes a vast global narrative spanning millennia and continents. A second states simply: “I have no amazing tales of walking across the desert to reunite my family. I can’t tell you what it’s like to visit dozens of countries... I have no knowledge of the smell of local foods cooking half-way around the world” (p. 12). And Margery Ann Maberly Gilmore, Jane Gilmore’s mom, in her *Travel Diary, 1986* wrote an exquisite reappraisal of cultural values when she described Gutzon Borglum’s megalomaniacal Mount Rushmore (for which he actually demanded congressional funds earmarked for depression relief in 1931). She wrote, “Oct 10 Mon. Breakfast Wendy’s (Ham Egg Sand). Mt. Rushmore - too foggy. Lunch McDonalds (Big Mac).”

Nearby, *The Potato Theater* brings Gilmore’s personal narrative even more into the spotlight (p. 30-31). This work is a portable vaudeville theater on wheels. At the center of the sculpture on the public-or-performance side of a nine-foot central tower are three small white shelves: the middle one holds the eponymous three-inch plastic potato and its painted portrait (both found objects). On the other, or behind-the-scenes, side of the tower Gilmore has positioned in descending order a pale pink ceramic fan, a strange black-rubber



protrusion from the plumbing-supplies aisle, and a pleated metal “curtain” below which one sees its oversized wheels. Two wood-panel wings extend from this center, like constructed stage flats and props, some painted black and others varnished. Grey stretchy fabric with embedded ping-pong ball-sized “growths” is draped over one corner. Two theater ropes and posts extend even further to each side as if to manage anticipated guests. The posts are topped with large breast-like fabric forms, one inflated and the other collapsed. At center stage is a flat, silver, metal-tiled surface. Each tile is inscribed with one of the many jobs



Gilmor has held in life—from change-girl at a Lake Tahoe casino to bookkeeper for a Chicago mafia-affiliated dentist. In the center of everything is an early-twentieth century charcoal portrait of a surly-looking, unidentified man. It is framed with an antique wooden hat-mold and a pink stuffed velvet rope that resembles both a piecrust and a fleshy pink colon (p. 20). The man and his frame rotate slowly, allowing him to seem to pass judgement on both us, as visitors, and on the inscriptions around him.

Is this man the judgmental audience? And does *The Potato Theater* suggest that we are all “like a poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more?” Are we performing carefully constructed identities for external consumption and external judgment? And if so, why? The grumpy old man who spins around judging us is anonymous—we don’t know him and he doesn’t know us. His judgment is based on a whim and a prejudice—the spin of the wheel of fate or the state of his dyspeptic pink colon. And yet, Gilmor cannot allow things to be that simple. She pulls us up on our own prejudice and brings an aching humanity to even him. Jane Gilmor’s aunt bought the picture of this unknown man at an estate sale and kept it hanging over her fireplace for many, many years. She kept his anonymous, disembodied, uprooted face safe, real, and remembered. Likewise, the humble potato to which *The Potato Theater* is dedicated (p. 22), remembers the millions of nameless, faceless people whose dislocation, disruption, migration, and loss it represents. The potato first precipitated a vast population explosion and then equally vast famines in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. Crop failures in the nineteenth century drove a number of mass migrations to the United States after 1848. Moreover, Gilmor’s plastic potato and potato portrait in *The Potato Theater* represent increasingly faceless, voiceless, and distant but deeply moving stories of migration that underscore the fallibility of historical narratives and fixed identities.

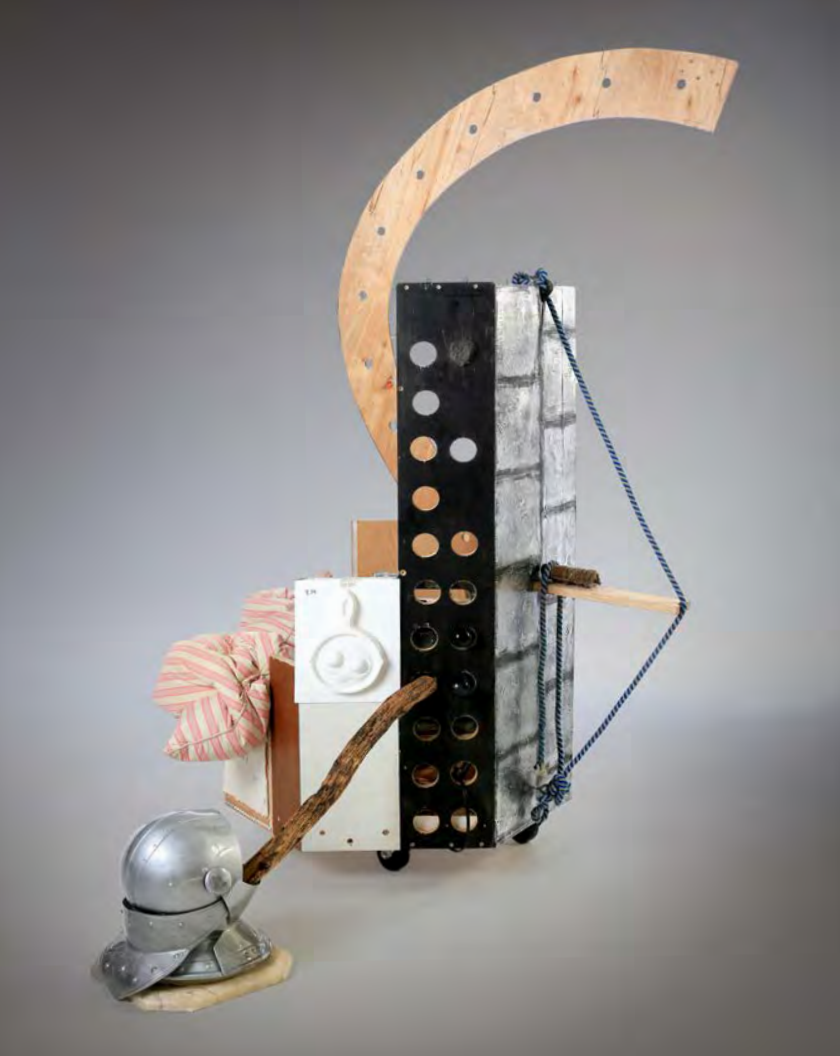


Finally, Gilmor returns to the contemporary world in *Invasive Species* (p. 23, 36-37), ironically by referring back to the dark painted metal skirt and slim torso of *Breakfast on Pluto* (p. 16-17). But there are significant differences. Where *Breakfast* was covered in softly lit protective veils giving off a fragile, delicate, easily hurt, and open to attack aspect, perhaps of a COVID-19 lockdown world, *Invasive Species* seems brighter, stronger, bolder, and more assertive. Has *Invasive Species* moved on? The brilliant Mexican aqua oilcloth that surrounds *Invasive Species*' central post oozes confidence, while its teal colored spiraling clothesline wire and spiky cleaning brush collar throw off energy. The sculpture actually seems to rock back-and-forth energetically while the huge metal "rock" that surmounts it spews bubbles from its rear to resemble a rocket ship blasting-off. *Invasive Species* is joyously self-assured, ready to supplant and suppress less sturdy species. There is less pink in this piece than in any other sculpture in this show, but there are still startling pink roses fighting to get out of its oilcloth center. This work prolongs yet extends the discourse of *Pandemic Planet*. It seems to embrace and celebrate a new future and a new world, while it cautions against the very thing it wants to embrace. It complicates the question and leaves it once again moot. Part of us wants to get up and dance along with *Invasive Species* and part of us wants to run from it like the naively painted cat on the wall opposite its rocket's trajectory. Do we



dare to believe that we can move beyond a world in crisis, to hope again? And if we do, will *Invasive Species* take us over? Is it good? Or is it bad? And does it matter? Is there even an answer? That is the conundrum of Gilmor's art, and it is also what makes it so significant. Jane Gilmor doesn't give you any easy answers.

























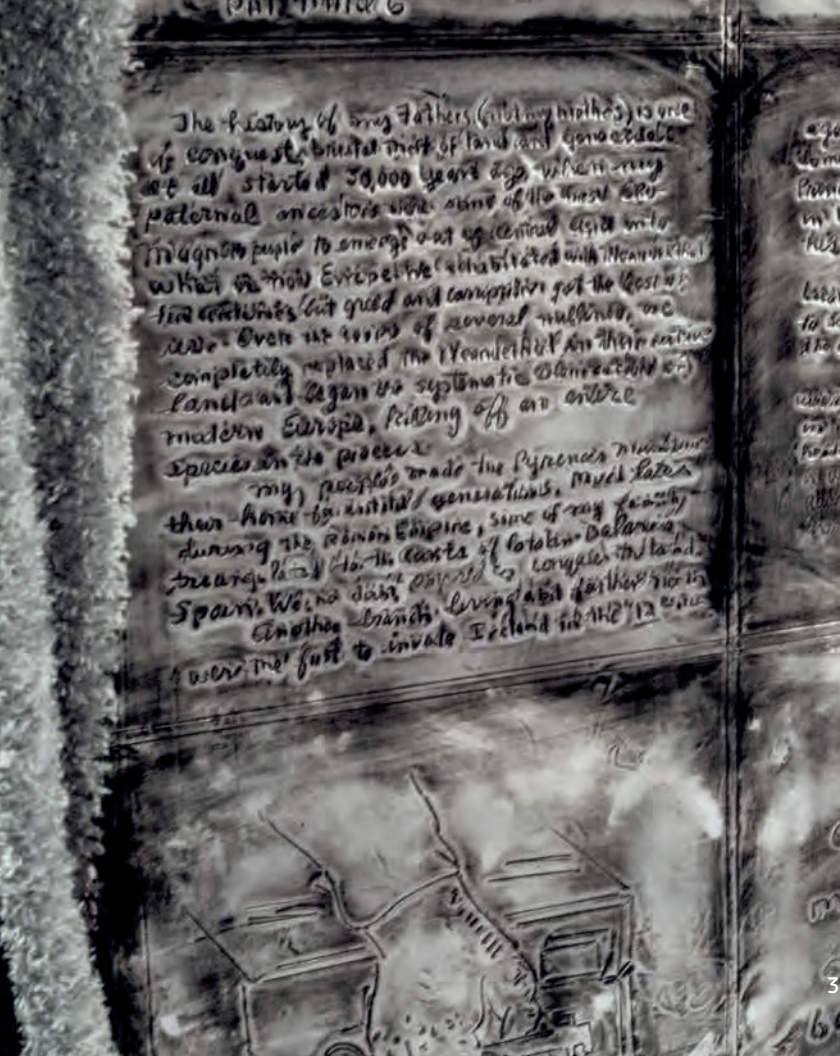












The history of my Father's (and my Mother's) is one  
 of conquest, brutal merit of land and genocide.  
 It all started 30,000 years ago, when my  
 paternal ancestors were some of the first  
 Magnesian people to emerge out of central Asia into  
 what is now Europe. We were initially with Neanderthals  
 for centuries, but greed and competition got the best of  
 us. Over the course of several millennia, we  
 completely replaced the Neanderthals in their native  
 lands and began the systematic extermination of  
 modern Europe, killing off an entire  
 species in the process.  
 My people made the Pyrenees mountains  
 their home for initial generations. Much later,  
 during the Roman Empire, some of my family  
 trekked to the North Coast of Britain, where  
 Spain. We no doubt played a large role in  
 another branch, living a bit further north  
 were not just to invade Ireland in the 12th century.

again, pushed  
 the migration.  
 Around 1165, when  
 his secret  
 the battle  
 leading the ship  
 to some degree  
 the ship's history.  
 A story  
 about the ship  
 in the Apple  
 history of the  
 ship's history.  
 The ship's history.











































# Plate IDs

## 4 *Breakfast on Pluto*, 2019–20.

Mosquito netting, Papasan chair frame, clothing, novelty fabric, 36-gauge aluminum, Styrofoam balls, rubber bands, electric rotating platform, rope lighting, 6.5 ft. h. x 5 ft. dia.

## 5 *Dinner on the Dark Side*, 2021.

Mosquito netting, Papasan chair frame, voile fabric, 36-gauge gold aluminum sheeting, Styrofoam cones, electric rotating platform, rope lighting, 6.5 ft. h. x 5 ft. dia.

## 6 *Fatigue*, 2019.

Repurposed wood shelves, prom dress skirt, 3-minute video (*Fatigue*, 2004), flat screen T.V., handmade Mexican candles, 48 x 30 x 5 in.

## 8 *Dinner on the Dark Side*, detail, 2021.

Styrofoam cones, novelty fabric, electric rotating platform under fabric ball, 20 x 20 x 20 in.

## 9 *Breakfast on Pluto*, installation image, 2021.

Katz Gallery, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

## 10 “*Pandemic Planet*,” community project, 2021.

Metal Tooling, Educator Training Workshop, Figge Art Museum, August 2021.

## 11 Concept drawing for “*Pandemic Planet*,” community project, 2021.

## 12 *A Semester at Sea*, detail, 2019–21.

Text by Matthew Butler, 36-gauge aluminum, India ink, wood, 18 x 2 x 1 in.

Top left: *Clouds*, 2008. Repurposed artwork by Antonio Caramelo, photos of clouds on crushed copy paper, fishing line, 36 in. x 18 in. dia.

Top right: *Internal Organs*, 2021. Repurposed cast wax votives of colon, stomach, and lung from Fatima, Portugal, life-size (eg: stomach is 8 x 4 x 5 in.).

Bottom: *Saturday May 25, 1996*, 2003–2020. Handmade aluminum book, text by Dennis Jennings, recycled appliance factory steel sheeting, steel chaining, spiral binding, 10 x 8 x 2 in.

## 14 *Breakfast on Pluto*, installation image, 2021.

Katz Gallery, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

## 16 *Invasive Species*, detail, 2021.

Hand-formed 36-gauge aluminum sheeting, India ink, Mexican oilcloth, plastic-coated clothesline wire, wood and cement tubing, 50 in. x 24 in. dia.

## 17 *Dinner on the Dark Side*, detail, 2021.

Voile, dyed mosquito netting, hand-formed 36-gauge gold aluminum, tube lighting, 5 ft. x 4 ft. dia.

## 18 *Breakfast on Pluto*, detail, 2019–20.

Styrofoam balls, fabric, rubber bands, repurposed vintage clothing (Gilmore’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade “can-can” underskirt, 1957), 30 in. x 40 in. dia.

## 19 *Pandemic Planet*, interior detail, 2021.

Plaster structure lined with 36-gauge aluminum, handmade stuffed fabric tube, brown plastic eggs in net bag, 27 in. h. x 34 in. dia.

## 20 *The Potato Theater*, detail, 2019–2020.

1920s charcoal portrait, antique wood hat mold, handmade cord, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum (Jane’s work history), 18 x 18 x 18 in.

## 21 *A Semester at Sea*, detail, 2019–2021.

Wood, Balinese scroll painting, fabric-covered vibrating ball, metal plumb-bob, cotton string, 18 x 13 x 15 in.

## 22 *The Potato Theater*, detail, 2019–2020.

Wood shelf and frame, plastic potato, thrift store watercolor of a potato, 12 x 9 x 5 in.

## 23 *Invasive Species*, detail, 2021.

Hand-formed aluminum, India ink, Mexican oilcloth, plastic-coated clothesline wire, 50 in. x 24 in. dia.

## 24 *Pathetic*, 2014–19.

Top left: Detail. Note found near a mouse trap, wood, rickrack, vintage feather pillow from Sisters of Mercy convent sale, 20 x 18 x 5 in.

Top right: Wood, deconstructed electric neck massagers, feather pillows from Sisters of Mercy convent sale, plastic mold for frying pan with eggs, plastic knight’s helmet, marble pedestal, tree limb, rope, vintage tool handle, wheels, text on 36-gauge aluminum, 6.5 x 4 x 5 ft.

Bottom: Detail. Wood, found note, rick-rack, deconstructed electric neck massagers, plastic mold for frying pan with eggs, rope, vintage tool handle, text on 36-gauge aluminum, 4 x 4 x 3 ft.

## 25 *Pathetic*, 2014–19.

Embossed 36-gauge aluminum, collected text, wood, rope, vintage tool handle, sailboat bookshelf, plastic knight’s helmet, tree limb, wheels, 6.5 x 4 x 5 ft.

## 26 *Pitiful*, 2014–16.

Top left: Detail. Lazy Susan cabinet, vintage crocheted doilies, interior lights, cotton muslin and steel wire, decorative metal snowflake is 12 in. dia.

Top right: Lazy Susan cabinet, cotton muslin, steel wire, Christmas craft item, 4 x 4 x 3 ft.

Bottom: Detail. Found Christmas craft item, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, 12 x 18 x 24 in.

**27** *Pitiful*, 2014-16.

Lazy Susan cabinet, vintage crocheted doilies, cotton muslin with plastic tubing, decorative metal snowflake, found Christmas craft item, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, interior lights, 4 x 4 x 3 ft.

**28** *Pandemic Planet*, 2021.

Top left: Copper tubing support structure by Rick Edelman, 2004 (rocks back and forth), plaster structure lined with 36-gauge aluminum, stuffed fabric tube, 27 in. h. x 34 in. dia.

Top right: Detail. Copper tubing outer structure, plaster inner form lined with 36-gauge aluminum, fabric tube, 27 in x 34 in. dia.

Bottom: Detail. Plaster structure lined with 36-gauge aluminum, sheeting, stuffed fabric tube, brown plastic eggs in net bag, 27 x 18 x 23 in.

**29** *Pandemic Planet*, 2021.

Copper tubing support structure by Rick Edelman, 2004 (rocks back and forth), plaster structure lined with 36-gauge aluminum, stuffed fabric tube, brown plastic eggs in net bag, 27 in. h. x 34 in. dia.

**30** *The Potato Theater*, 2019-20.

Top left: Detail. Wood, painted shelf, decorative plaster fan, fan is 9 x 13 x 2 in.

Top right: Wood, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, India ink, unidentified plumbing supply item, decorative plaster fan, wheels, 8 x 15 x 5 ft.

Bottom: Wood, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, India ink, antique wood hat mold, 1920s charcoal portrait, velvet cord, fabric with foam balls and rubber bands, 6 x 5 x 4 ft.

**31** *The Potato Theater*, 2019-20.

Wood, fabric with foam balls, antique wood hat mold, found plastic potato and watercolor of a potato, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, 1920s charcoal portrait, wheels, discharge-dyed black cotton, leather shoe bottom, brass pedestal, theater rope, 8 x 12 x 5 ft.

**32** *A Semester at Sea*, 2019-2021.

Top left: Detail, handmade matchstick replica of Columbus's ship the *Santa María* by Henry Smith (former St Pius School janitor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) 1980s, internal red lighting, quilted velvet upholstery fabric, cotton duck sails, 20 x 15 x 12 in.

Top right: Novelty fabric over deconstructed electric neck massagers, wood, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, India ink, quilted velvet upholstery fabric, matchstick boat replica of the *Santa María* (Henry Smith, 1980s), 7 x 6 x 13 ft.

Bottom: Detail. Contributed text and images on aluminum sheeting, India ink, wood, quilted velvet upholstery fabric, matchstick boat replica of the *Santa María* (Henry Smith, 1980s), 4 x 4 x 12 ft.

**33** *A Semester at Sea*, 2019-2021.

Wood, Balinese scroll painting, quilted velvet upholstery fabric, found notices, text embossed on 36-gauge aluminum, India ink, matchstick boat replica of the *Santa María* (Henry Smith, 1980s), 6.5 x 5 x 16 ft.

**34** *Rock-A-Bye-Bye*, 2020.

Top left: Detail. Handmade silk and lace pillows, fishing line, metallic fabric stretched over copper tubing, each pillow 1.5 x 2 x 2 in.

Top right: Detail. embossed 5 ml. copper sheeting ruffle, India ink, gold metallic fabric stretched over copper tubing, 18 x 5 x 18 in.

Bottom left: Detail. Vintage painting on curved glass, wood enamel frame, 19 x 14 x 5 in.

Bottom right: Hand-formed copper tubing structures by Rick Edelman, 2004, sheer gold metallic fabric stretched over copper frames, vintage painting on glass, stand, embossed copper ruffle, 9 x 10 x 15 ft.

**35** *Rock-A-Bye-Bye*, detail, 2020.

Hand-formed copper tubing structures by Rick Edelman 2004, gold metallic fabric stretched over copper tubing, vintage painting on glass, copper stand, plaster cones with rope and nylon strips, plastic needlepoint circles, embossed copper ruffle, 6.5 x 8 x 10 ft.

**36** *Invasive Species*, 2021.

Top left: Detail. Thrift store painting of tiger (gift of Barry Sigel), 14 in x 11 in.

Top right: Detail, hand-formed 36-gauge aluminum rock form, India Ink, chicken wire, 30 in. x 28 in. dia.

Bottom: Studio installation view, hand-formed aluminum rocks and skirt, India ink, Mexican oilcloth, plastic-coated clothesline wire, floor cleaner brush attachment, thrift store painting, internal electric bubble machine, 6 x 4 x 4 ft., overall dimensions variable.

**37** *Invasive Species*, detail, 2021.

Cement tube form, Mexican oilcloth, plastic-coated clothesline wire, aluminum sheeting, 36 in. x 13 in. dia.

**38-39** *Breakfast on Pluto*, installation images, 2021.

Katz Gallery, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

**40-41** *Breakfast on Pluto*, installation images, 2021.

Katz Gallery, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

**46** Jane Gilmor in her studio, The Cherry Building, New Bo, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 2020.

**47** *Congratulations*, detail, 2020-2021.

Cotton sail cloth, plastic tubing, purchased glitter letters on cotton string, 4 x 6.5 x 1 ft.

**Photo credits:** David Van Allen, Rodney Bradley, Jane Gilmor. Installation and workshop images courtesy of the Figge Art Museum.





## Jane Gilmor

<http://www.janegilmor.com>

Jane Gilmor is known for her intermedia work engaging with social and cultural issues. She began exhibiting internationally in 1976 and A.I.R. Gallery, NYC, published her monograph, *Jane Gilmor: I'll Be Back for The Cat*, by art historian Joy Sperling in 2012. One of five artists nationally, Gilmor received a 2011 Tanne Foundation Award and was the 2017 George A. Miller Endowed Visiting Artist, Center for Advanced Studies, the University of Illinois, Champaign. She is currently collaborating with Portuguese collective Pinto Duo on *Shifting Ground*, a project with Central African Immigrants in Iowa and Portugal.

Gilmor has received an NEA Fellowship and project grants, a McKnight Interdisciplinary Fellowship, and residencies in Ireland, Italy, London, The McDowell Colony, The Banff Center and The Bemis Center. In 2003-04 she was a Fulbright Scholar at Evora University in Portugal.

She has exhibited at the Kochi-Murzikis Biennale, India, 2018; Pirogi, Brooklyn; Chicago Cultural Center; Platforma Revolver, Lisbon, Portugal; The Des Moines Art Center; MOMA PS 1, Queens; The Renwick Gallery of The Smithsonian, D.C.; and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, among many others. Solo shows include *The Architecture of Migration*, Long Island University, Brooklyn, and *Blind*, A.I.R. Gallery, New York.

Her work is reviewed in The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, The New Art Examiner and included in such pivotal books as Lucy Lippard's *OVERLAY: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*, 1983; Broude and Gerrard's *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, Abrams, 1993; and *Pioneer Feminists: Women Who Changed America, 1963-1976*, Barbara Love, University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Gilmor studied at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Iowa State University, and has an MFA from The University of Iowa. She is Emeritus Professor of Art at Mount Mercy University and is affiliated with A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn and Olson-Larsen Galleries in Des Moines. She maintains a studio in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



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No one is more articulate about my work than historian/critic Joy Sperling who also wrote the career monograph *Jane Gilmor: I'll Be Back for The Cat*, A.I.R. Gallery, 2012. As good criticism does, both Joy and Vanessa's essays here gave me profound insights into my work.

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