



Jonas Sebura

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Confounded into Unitary Chaos places us amongst the totems and ritual artifacts of an imaginary, yet naggingly familiar religion. Jonas Sebura uses natural elements and geometric design to pose questions about belief through the lens of the absurd. His religion comes equipped with a printed manual and artifacts displayed for our imagined use. His religion is entertaining yet scary, like an adolescent finding a Ouija board.

Sebura works in contrasting ideas. In *The Other End*, a hand, extended by a long braid of hair, is reaching for a pile of straw, next to what looks to be a partially fossilized stump. These cryptic items are organized neatly for us on a chrome gridded platform reminiscent of an outdated 1960s museum room. With the straightforward "explanation" in the manual of actions to accompany this, Sebura tells us we aren't looking at the past but are being introduced to an idea that is rooted in our contemporary complexity, even perplexity.

His religion mixes nature with fear, as in *Corn Husker*, a mask covered in dry corn kernels which stares at us like something from a 1980s horror movie. He allows the vision of the usurped, out-of-place natural to create questions to which we think we should already know the answers. In *Making Do*, a bucket bellows a soundtrack of ocean sounds at three worn, rigidly upright shells, as if neither we nor they remember their origin or their once uncanny recall of an ocean's roar.

Confounded into Unitary Chaos understands our need to belong, to be part of an organization. Sebura's sewn flags invoke the symbolic banners of secret societies where a geometric symbol seems like just a decoration but has a specific message for those in the know. *Peace Flag*, hanging in the foyer of The Sculpture Center, expresses the mystery as we enter and reminds us that we are now involved as we leave.

Sebura's religion taps into our want for belief. In *Search (finding place)* the black obsidian-like ergonomic handle tells us to search, and to keep searching. But in the end, his religion isn't about searching. It is about a desire to believe. It is a reflection of today's overwhelming influx of information yet lack of answers and how, as absurd as unquestioning faith can look in the face of facts, it still becomes the choice for many, often leading to opinions solely because they reinforce that faith. Sebura's is a religion without allegory. It refrains from retelling stories we are supposed to learn from in favor of belief without a foundation for an unknown return.

—Ron Lambert



Jonas Sebura earned his BFA from Alfred University's School of Art and Design (2003) and his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2011). Currently he is Assistant Professor in Sculpture/Expanded Media at Kent State University's School of Art. He also has a performance practice under the pseudonym of Sebura & Gartelmann.

