

## Art Installation " We Are Ghosts" Post- Native-American art by Todd Leisek.

Written by Narveen Aryaputri  
Friday, 08 November 2013 14:55

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Vernissage for Todd Leisek:

November 15th. 2014

Art Installation : " We Are Ghosts"

Mixed media.

This art installation is a room-sized glass exhibit.

At The Phoenix.

1530 Fifth. Avenue, Moline.

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Friday. November 15th. 2013 from 6-9 p.m.

Free and open to all.

The exhibit and show will continue through February 2014.

Hours for the Phoenix Art Gallery : 6pm - 9p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and By Appointment.

[www.aththephoenix.com](http://www.aththephoenix.com) , [309-762-8547](tel:309-762-8547)

### **Artist's description: About the Installation:**

" This large installation is a communication and an interaction between what my family's identity, ethnicity and past has faced through the years. Behind closed doors an individual hides their own identity and reality. By breaking down these "doors" and "walls," our identities can be slightly revealed and displaced by reflections of light upon the exhibition wall.

In this installation, I concentrate on drawing upon the simple concepts of the breakdown of these doorways and walls through looking through broken glass, doors and walls taken from

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dismantled homes. This piece is the past as well as the present as it confronts some of the conflicts of tribal identity in the United States. Four doorways will be presented in the act of breaking apart with only the shards of clear glass to bind them together and the holding together of the walls will display the reflection of a past identity of a mixed tribal past. The installation is a chance to speak without words through the materials and the photographs hidden in the cracks of the walls.

I am mixed of Potawatomi, Sac/Fox and Cherokee. Since I am of mixed tribal generation, where do I fit in with the world or how does my family (ancestors) fit in? We roam as "ghosts" blending in from one subculture to the next recreating ourselves over and over without stepping through to connect with our tribal roots or ancestral traditions. There are thousands of us still roaming the United States displaced."

### Artist Statement

My artwork (installations) is based from sensory experiences (sounds, sights, smells and dreams) from the memories of my childhood experiences and the stories of family members long past. Throughout my experience as an artist; I have concentrated on these sparks of memory which are drawn from nature (landscape), dreams of my past, and the faded memories. In creating these abstract sculptural pieces, I'm attempting to bring back these recollections into a form of narrative or conceptual scene into the public space. By changing the landscape (public space), I draw the viewers into my art installations to bring their own sensory experiences into the artwork. These sensory experiences are connected to the material I use in my artwork (Ceramics, Wood, and stain). I hope that these pieces display the uncomfortable feeling of distance of Native American authenticity and the reconnection of my families lost mixed of Otoe and Osage/Pottawattamiepast. It is important that my artwork does not relate directly to a "Native American" background, yet an element of these memories, love and loss which was influenced by my ancestors past.

To present a loose form of this narrative in my art installations is an important element to address in the conditions of the Post-Native American identity. The traditions of the storyteller in my family today are dependent upon me to retell them in a modern relation of the struggles we face for a place (or voice) in this world. We all have memories and past experiences which we cannot completely explain, yet subconsciously influence our lives.

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### **About The Artist: □ Todd Liesek.**

I was born in Ogden, UT as Todd Woodmansee, yet grew up with a very collect a diverse step family in Lodi, CA. My first studies in Fine Arts started in San Francisco where I spent the first 4 years at San Francisco State University for my BA, which was dual emphasize in Art History and Fine Arts. I stayed for additional 3 years teaching for private art/music schools within the Bay Area, traveling around performing and producing artwork in California. In 2003, I received an invitation to study at University of Wisconsin-Superior for a MA in Studio Art in sculpture and ceramics. In addition, I had an opportunity to perform with the University Orchestra and Brazilian Guitar Ensemble to perform in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. After my graduation from UWS in 2006 with a MA, I moved from the cold frigid North to the Quad Cities, IL. For the past few years, I received an invitation for the MFA program at Vermont College Fine Arts in Contemporary theories and Art Installation which I recently graduated in 2013.

I have worked for private and public art/music schools and Higher Education at both the Community and State University levels for about 9 years and 3 years as an online instructor. I have taught art history/appreciation from 1300 to 21st Contemporary Art, Art Theory, Sculpture/Ceramics, music orchestration, and guitar performance.