



RUTH STANFORD | ARTIST STATEMENT

Science generally entails methodical investigation of a subject or phenomenon outside the self. The earth's layers of soil and stone tell a story of past physical process; the fossil record tells of lives once lived. The history of the earth, the universe, or the human race can be meticulously reconstructed through objective scientific investigation. My work is an attempt to invert the process of science, to encourage the viewer to self-examination, to explore a realm where individual truths deposit layer by layer. I want to compel the viewer to navigate the fault lines of human interaction, to seek out and explore places where things shift, places where truth comes into question. The unexpected happens along fault lines, unpredictable events from the emotional equivalent of subtle changes in groundwater flow to tectonic collision of continents. We travel daily across surface evidence of these fractures but rarely dig deeper to probe the crucial landmarks of internal topography. We live at the surface, and I want us to dig deeper.

My work involves both examination of existing rifts and combination of elements to create new pathways for interpreting everyday existence. In some works this involves a simple displaced meaning, creating a new rift with a different context to reveal, create, or illuminate truths. In other works an existing displacement serves as an inspiration or starting point. Displacement becomes an umbrella theme overlapping notions of presence/absence, permanence/impermanence, fiction/reality, conscious/unconscious in compelling and interrelated ways. My interest is in taking common elements of human experience and positioning them to reveal something more. I combine elements to create the fault lines, the places where unexpected things can happen, using a condensation of meaning that remains open and ambiguous at its core.

Much of my work addresses the ways we continue to interact with people, things, or situations that are no longer there and the things we learn about ourselves from a thoughtful consideration of what is gone. At the core of every work lies an enticement to slow down and to consider some aspect of our existence that may be too easily left unexamined.