

Maxwell Cloe: And the last piece we had for today was the one that's still a work in progress, *Disappearing Acts*. So tell me what's happening here?

SJ: Yeah, so this project was the one I was talking about that started as jumping right into experiments. I was back in my hometown and just looking around me at what I could animate with or what I could mess with. So I was taking in these logs from the tree trimmings and decided to just start playing with them. So a lot of those experiments don't - none of those experiments really show up here. I was doing things like animating the fungi on them. I was using my breath to melt snow. It was winter when I started. And I was thinking again of just all the ways I could animate with the log. That was it. And then I was also playing with, "okay, I'm bringing these like natural objects inside. How can I try to obscure the background or obscure the space that we're in?" I was also interested in that. "What if this is happening at night outside, or what if this is happening in the studio? I don't know." So there was just like - there's a lot of sense of play for me with this particular project, which was really nice to loosen up a little bit after being really heavily conceptual before starting a project. Because again, the ideas are all there. I'm still thinking a lot about extraction. I was thinking about fracking. My family - it wasn't even my family's choice. It was my dad's choice. He sold rights. He sold the rights, mineral rights of some property that he had to a fracking company because he lost his job. And stuff like that. So I'm always thinking about that. I was thinking that the ink really looks like oil. They're just like these sorts of quick visual interpretations that I just started to roll with. As I kept working on the piece, I was also thinking about "you know, how could I make these things disappear or appear to disappear into the background?" And so, even though of course I know they don't necessarily look like they're really disappearing, I was so interested in how could I use an analog animation technique, like painting it black with a black background to make it look like it's disappearing. I was really interested in sort of the analog with this work versus the digital, which I think shows up in all of my pieces, but this piece feels somehow really tactile, I think.

MC: and so how do you know when you're going to be done with this? I know that's a question. Artists are constantly struggling with.

SJ: Oh my gosh. Yeah. I mean, I had to kind of just stop myself. I was like - so I just got back from McDowell and I was editing this piece and I was just thinking, I was planning on like "oh, maybe I'll make it longer. Maybe I'll add more." But I've kind of decided that this is it, basically. It's going to be like a three-minute work and it's kind of in the hands of my composer at the moment. So yeah, I'm calling it basically done in terms of shooting animation. There's no way to know when this is done though. I could keep making footage forever because you can just keep iterating on the same ideas or I could add a new idea in and because this piece has very limited narrative, it's been incredibly challenging to figure out a structure. You know, there is the narrative that things, logs, get covered and there's the narrative that things go in and out, but there's sort of - I didn't have any narrative structure at all. Whereas I think in *Patch Work*, for example, and even in *Slate Lines*, there was a little more direction. So like with *Slate Lines*, I had a map of where the line was going. Right. I was like, "it's going to go this way around me and stop. Right. And for this piece, It could just keep going. So I had to just decide that needed to be done." It has, it's been a few years that I've been working on it and I'm like, I think I'm ready to move on.