

Will Boone: The Highway Hex

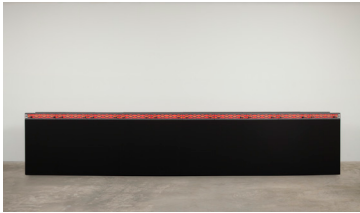
November 9, 2019–February 16, 2020

**Contemporary
Arts Museum
Houston**

All works courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, California and Karma, New York, New York

Please do not touch the artwork.

Visitors are invited to sit on *Resting Place* (2019) while viewing the film.



The River, 2019

Acrylic on wood, neon, and hardware



The Traitor, 2019

Resin, acrylic, enamel, and blanket on canvas



Culebra (Snake), 2019

Resin, acrylic, enamel, advertising banner, and belt on canvas



Resting Place, 2019
Naugahyde, neon, and steel



Sweet Perfume, 2019
VHS video transferred to digital: color, sound, 54:41 minutes

Film Credits:

Written, directed, and produced by Will Boone

Original soundtrack by Will Boone

Soundtrack performed by Will Boone, Lucas Gorham, and Ben Kujawski

Filmed by Will Boone and Ben Kujawski

Edited by Ben Kujawski

Cast (in order of appearance): Stephanie Boone, Will Boone, Lucas Gorham, Kamil Beski, Ben Kujawski, Kurt Kujawski, and featuring Terry Allen as “the Concerned Neighbor”

OVERVIEW

Sweet Perfume (2019) was written, directed, and produced by Will Boone. The artist shot the video in his studio, around his home, and along Interstate 10. A majority of the video's soundtrack was written by Boone and recorded in his studio with a few friends. Other sound components include field recordings and reworked versions of some of Boone's favorite Texas-centered songs.

NARRATIVE

The loose narrative of the film orbits around Leatherface, a character from the 1974 horror movie *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* directed by Tobe Hooper. Inspired by the glimpse of humanity revealed in Leatherface's dance at the end of the film, Boone follows the infamous character outside of his home state of Texas to California, where the character exists on the margins of society. Having left his dark past behind him, "Face" is obligated to return to Texas for the first time since his migration west. With the main character played by the artist's wife, Stephanie Boone, *Sweet Perfume* offers humor, confusion, and a potentially feminist extension of the cult film.

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Originally from Texas and now based in Los Angeles, California, Boone has observed *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*'s influence on popular culture and the general public's perception of Texas. There are fanatics and a huge corpus of fan fiction and folklore linked to the film, aspects which interest the artist as he is drawn to entities that already have an energy encompassing them.

Boone considers the movie a punk endeavor: the film was made with little time and lots of energy; it has a rawness and directness, not to mention it used a real chainsaw. In many ways, the film encapsulates the self-produced appeal of Texas itself, a state replete with independent individuals forging their own paths and identities.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The artist is fascinated by the magnetic pull of Southern California that seems to attract those who do not feel as though they belong elsewhere: the misfits and the dreamers. This sprawling region has become a place for people to reinvent and explore themselves in a more esoteric manner. Boone said, "The film is about someone dealing with who they are—the intersection of who they have been and who they want to be. It is also about the mind-warping physical space between Houston and Los Angeles: 1,500 miles on Interstate 10 through the desert. El Paso is halfway."

PROCESS

The film was shot on a VHS camcorder that Boone first used in high school. He described the experience of filming this way: “It is big and bulky, so you end up using it like a shotgun—you are not looking through the sight, you are pointing it with your body. It is about trying to get it the best you can in one shot, to use your body and not your mind, and to trust in what you are doing. We were not doing multiple takes. In my studio practice, I feel an urgency toward making things that supersede concerns of craft or elegance or the desire to make something beautiful. I was interested in applying that mode to video.”

EXHIBITION

Boone built numerous sets for the film in his studio, two of which have been combined and reproduced in CAMH’s gallery as a single sculpture. *Sweet Perfume* illustrates how Boone’s work cross-pollinates and informs other aspects of his practice. For this video he worked unconventionally: the artist made sculptures and paintings, which he then used in the film as props or a set, later returning them to the gallery space to show them as an artwork. In this way, he has subverted traditional objecthood.



Lazy X, 2019

Resin, acrylic, enamel, and highway patrol jacket on canvas



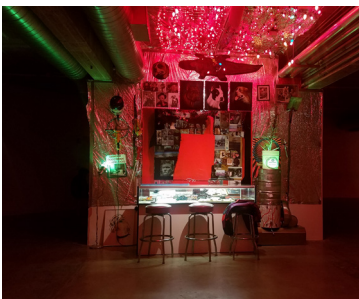
A Picture of Me (Without You), 2019

Wood, automotive paint, speakers, car stereo, and Plexiglas



Sky King, 2019

Resin, enamel, acrylic, and found material on canvas



The Melting Cowboy, 2019

MDF, glass, and found objects



Family Tree, 2019

Resin, acrylic, enamel, plywood, paper, and photographs on canvas