

Whether in her large installations or in her smaller sculptural book projects, Rodgers's work combines the written word with found objects to address ideas of loss and renewal, of leaving homes and creating new ones.



Megan Rodgers (USA, 1973), a child nomad, studied Theatre & Politics at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and at the Università di Bologna in Italy. She later moved to Chicago to start a theatre company, Division 13 Productions, where she performed and produced plays. She then completed the MFA program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and started the process of organizing her dreams into DREAM CATALOGUE.

Since moving to Basel, she has continued working with dreams, adding to her catalogue almost daily and completing DREAM LIBRARY, a library of 585 miniature books, as well as other sculptural artists' books based on the text of her own dreams. For the last few years, she has worked with different artists' collectives in Basel putting together pop-up exhibitions where she has had the opportunity to return to her theatre roots and do participatory multi-media installations including OF WATER AND BODIES, WHAT WE DIDN'T LEAVE BEHIND, 22 HOMES, and CREATING HOME, a large three-room installation tailor made for the Schusev Museum of Architecture in Moscow. These projects address questions of leaving old homes and creating new ones and have employed materials as varied as old wooden dollhouses, bathtubs, rocks, soap, balloons, felt, copper wire, cork and terracotta.



Pack Me Up & Take Me with You, 2019
Terracotta, box and fabric pillow
Various, c. 20 x 10 x 10 cm each
380-440 Euro each/ 125,000. HUF

Clay figures with amorphous bodies and searching facial expressions, each housed in their own silk-lined box, ready for travel. A caravan of 62 similar figures were last featured in a balloon-filled room at the Schusev Museum in Moscow as Step 1 of CREATING HOME tracing a metaphorical journey of creating a new home in a new place. This first step was entitled “Find a way” and emphasized the power of community and bonding together when setting out on a journey. By contrast, these figures have found their own way and an entirely different means of travel – the individual padded box, easily packed into a suitcase or sent through the post. And who among us, hasn’t wished we could just send ourselves somewhere as easily as a package?

What We Didn't Leave Behind, 2019
62 felt shadows and paper tags,
Cyanotype carpets: 50 x 350 cm
Installed in Centrepoint, Basel



Hanging on the wall are 62 “shadows” of the artefacts which immigrants brought with them when they came to Switzerland. In 2015, these objects were borrowed for the site-specific installation “what we didn't leave behind” and they were returned to their owners. What remains are the dark blue felt shadows of these objects along with an “archaeological” tag describing the object, its origin and path it has taken with its owner across different cities and countries. Suspended at the back is an undulating carpet of blueprints -- a patchwork of cyanotype prints reproducing dream homes from the USA, Switzerland and Russia. Even when a new country or city promises brighter prospects, so much is left behind when people leave their own countries -- family, language, familiarity, a sense of belonging. But what wasn't left behind? What are those bits that have travelled with us from place to place? Of course, sentimentality is a luxury not all immigrants can afford. Some have come with the clothes on their backs, the shoes on their feet, their precious kids on their hips.....



*Creating Home,
2018
Terracotta figures,
felt shadows,
balloons, cork
foundations,
archaeological
tags, cyano-types in
3 room site-specific
installation in
Schusev Museum of
Architecture,
Moscow*

Step 1: FIND A WAY (don't lose hope): Follow 62 amorphous, clay figures as they push through a sea of hope, desire, determination, desperation. **Step 2:** HAVE A PLAN (dream the impossible dream) Ride an undulating blue carpet stitched with cyanotype floor plans of fantasy homes as you listen to the watery composition of Joseph Mills. **Step 3:** CREATE A HOME (use the materials at hand) These transplanted memories form the unique shapes of 62 cork foundations for fragile, new homes – the start of a new city.

Dream Homes, 2007
 5 wood and paper house books
 c. 5 x 6 x 12 cm each
 900 Euro



These five small houses are actually five long books which record the dreams I dreamt between 2000 and 2003. Those in the orange houses were dreamt at my own home in Chicago and those in the white house were dreamt when I slept in another place. Does where we sleep (at home or not at home) influence the content of dreams? Viewers may open the books by taking the roof off the house which causes the folded pages inside to spring out like a jack-in-the-box, which when open to its full extent extends approximately 10 meters long. The houses are playful both in color and form. They invite associations with childhood toys and viewers tend to laugh when the pages pop out and surprise them. Dreams themselves are continually surprising and playful and, according to some theorists, the key to understanding creativity in the brain.





Dream Library, 2007

Wooden typesetting drawer: 66 x 54 x 5 cm

585 paper books: 3 x 3.5 x .5 cm each

9,400 Euro

This miniature library of dreams records dreams dreamt between 1999 and 2006. A sectioned drawer once used to organize letters for type setting are used as a set of library shelves with 585 miniature books (3 x 3.5 cm). Each book chronicles the “stories told while asleep” (the dreams dreamt) on a particular night in a particular place. The books are each printed and folded by hand and are arranged chronologically. The places are marked with symbols tracking various homes and travels the artist had during those seven years. The small format is a response to these travels and reflects a desire for “portability.”

Viewers are encouraged to read the books and they tend to handle them very delicately, although they often return the books to the wrong place, despite the numbering system, like a memory changes slightly each time it is recalled. The pattern and the changes recall Paul Klee’s grid paintings and diagrams neurologists use in describing “content-addressable memory.”



Dream Babies, 2008
acetone transfer on fabric,
series of 24 bodies
various dimensions circa 40 x 40 cm each
220 Euro each

The text from 24 different dreams dealing with babies is printed on 24 white body suits each with a black and white element or image from the dream. In the dreams, most of the babies are in dangerous or confusing situations requiring caution and care. They change shape, grow and disappear. They are often both present and absent at the same time. In a similar way, the empty body suits evoke absent bodies and the various sizes and styles of the suits echo a baby's rapidly changing body. A label denotes the year the dream was dreamt counted as "YEARS PRIOR TO MOTHERHOOD" since the project was started and completed during my first pregnancy in 2007/08.

We Have Hearts, 2015

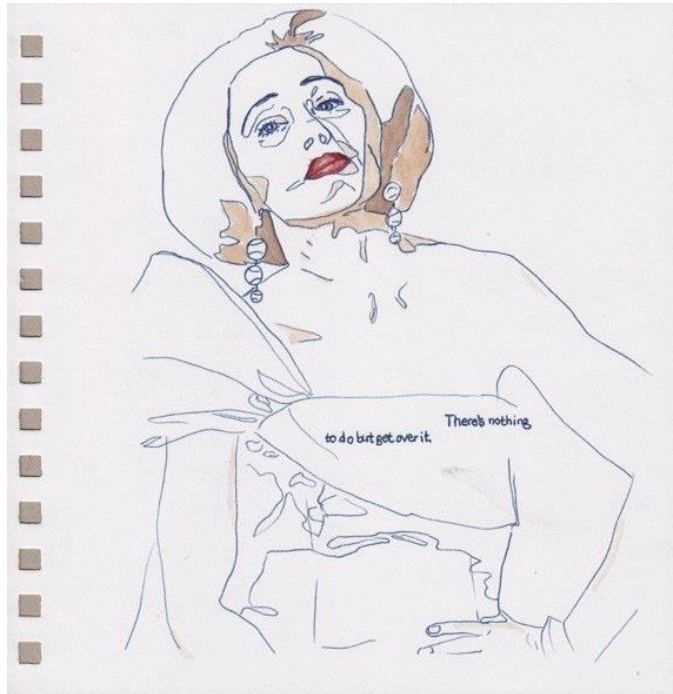
*dress dummy with small drawing and
sound piece from D.W. Novey, The Guide
to Hearts Sounds: Normal & Abnormal,
43 x 100 x 20 cm,
2200. CHF*

Originally hung from the ceiling in conjunction with small drawings as part of a site-specific installation called OF WATER AND BODIES created for the cellar of Katapult Galerie in Basel, April 2015, in collaboration with Alvin McIntyre. Viewers can hear the sound piece only when hugging the hanging dress dummy and pressing their ears against its chest. The needs and desires of the body take a central role in this sound piece and its corresponding drawings.



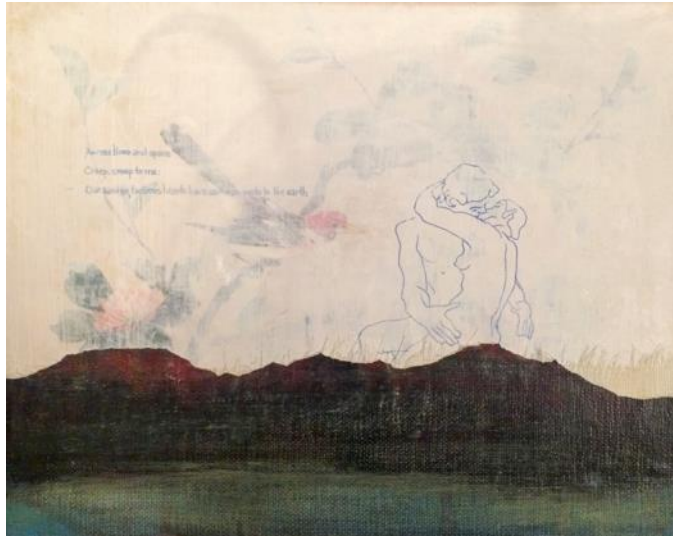
CC: The New Yorker, 2009
watercolor on blue carbon drawing
19 x 19 cm,
50 Euro each

shown: "There's nothing to do but get over it" Image after Cindy Sherman, quote from David Denby



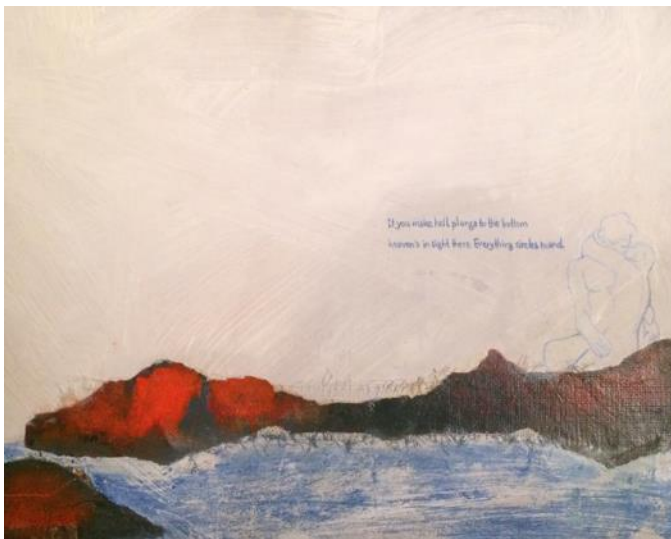
CC: THE NEW YORKER is a series of 365 watercolor 'collages' with quotes taken from the 50 editions of *The New Yorker* magazine issued in 2007. Instead of using scissors and glue to make these collages, the words and images are copied by hand using blue carbon paper. These are literal "carbon copies" -- the "cc: " that has remained in use in letters and emails even as carbon paper itself has all but disappeared. Taking the phrases out of context and adding the images gives the words other levels of meaning. The drawn images, accented subtly with watercolors, have a cartoon-ish quality which seems appropriate given *The New Yorker* is more well-known for its cartoons than for its photography.

After Rodin: Creep, 2017
Mixed media on floral print
framed 30 x 37 cm
370. Euro



“Across time and space / Creep, creep to me / Our savage, factious hearts have common roots in the earth” Sándor Weöres, *The Fifth Symphony*

After Auguste Rodin’s sculpture *The Kiss* with a quote from Sándor Weöres. This piece, along with its companion pieces repeating the clichéd image of *The Kiss*, addresses the unending process of how we try to find, maintain, and recapture that feeling of losing ourselves in a kiss, all the while knowing we’re simply repeating familiar patterns. And what is this “romantic” sculpture of Rodin’s? An intertwined Francesca and Paolo, a married woman and her brother-in-law, swept away by emotion and done away with by a crazed husband/brother only to find themselves in the second circle of Dante’s *Hell*. A floral print, found after a particularly intense tango lesson, over-painted and altered with the repeated image and text, combines the cardinal sin of lust with the incapacity to think of the future.

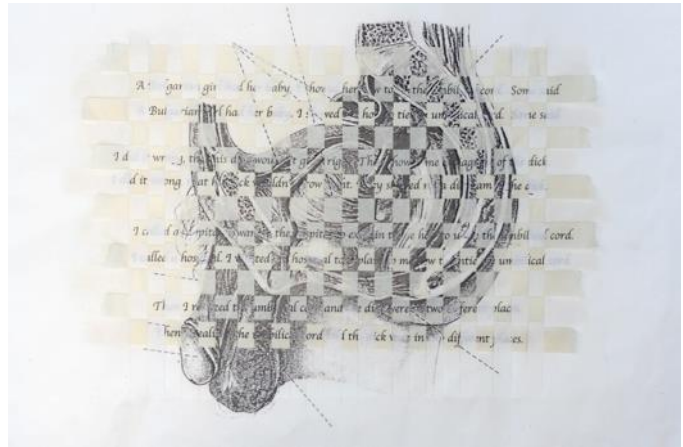




Pure/Impure: Flip Me, 2015
Carved soap, wood block
edition of 8 (6 sold, 2 remain)
14 x 14 x 8 cm
180 Euro

Carved laundry soap mounted on a wood block so it spins. On one side: "PURE". On the other side: "IMPURE." Labeled with the instruction: 'flip me'. First exhibited next to the bath tub as part of the site-specific installation OF WATER AND BODIES created in April 2015 in the cellar of Galerie Katapult in Basel and later exhibited in Her Door Stood Open 2017 and Camp Basel Revisited 2018 during Art Basel 2017 and 2018.

Dream Weaving: Umbilical Cord, 2007
Acetone transfer on woven paper
46 x 63 cm, framed in gold
490 Euro



The text from different dreams dealing with babies is printed on a large piece of paper then cut into strips. A photograph is printed on almost transparent paper and also cut into strips. The text and the image are then woven together obscuring parts of both the text and the image. The same text and image are used in both the pink and the cream versions allowing the obscured parts in one to be read in the other and vice versa.



Education

- 2001-2003 The School of the Art Institute of Chicago: Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts
- 1996-2000 Division 13 Productions, Chicago: Producing member of theatre company
- 1993-1994 University of Bologna, Italy: Dipartimento di Arte, Musica e Spettacolo
- 1991-1995 Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts: BA, Theatre & Politics
- 1990-1991 Liceo Cantonale di Locarno, CH: AFS Foreign Exchange Student

Solo Exhibits

- 2019 Centrepoint Artwall, *What We Didn't Leave Behind*, solo show (Basel)
- 2018 Schusev Museum of Architecture, *Creating Home*, 3 room installation (Moscow)
- 2016 Centrepoint Artwall, *CC: The New Yorker* solo show (Basel)
- 2012 Schlössli Restaurant, *CC: The New Yorker* solo show (Aesch)
- 2011 Schlössli Restaurant, *up close/far away* solo show (Aesch)
- 2010 BIS Bank Sports Club, *CC: The New Yorker* solo show (Basel)
- 2010 Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, solo show (Basel)
- 2007 Dreamworks, Open studio (Basel)
- 2006 Coffee, Chocolate & Cigarettes, Open studio (Basel)
- 2005 Clearance, Images Gallery (Chicago)
- 2005 How to Get Back Up, Fraction Workspace (Chicago)
- 2003 Any Girl You Want, Artwindows 2003, Agnes B. (Chicago)
- 2002 Words:Red, Gallery 2 Performance Series (Chicago)
- 2001 Short Cut for Eric Berne with composer J. Chen, Gus Lucky's Gallery (Minneapolis)
- 2001 Out of Bounds, Can Gallery (Chicago)
- 1997 Bombs in the Ladies Room, Yello Gallery (Chicago)

Selected Group Exhibits

- 2019 a-space, Art Market Budapest, (Budapest)
- 2018 Gewerbehäus Q37 (Rheinfelden)
- 2017 The Others Art Fair (Torino)
- 2017 a-space, Art Market Budapest, (Budapest)
- 2017 Siegnethaler Farm, forest installation of *22 Homes: for Birds & Bees Dreaming* (Aesch)
- 2017 a-space, Camp Basel outdoor installation and happening (parallel to Art Basel)
- 2017 frontofbicycle, Pop Up Gallery Riehentorstrasse (Basel)
- 2017 a-space, Set Up Contemporary Art Fair, (Bologna)
- 2016 Riders in Blue, Basel Art Center, frontofbicycle group show, installation (Basel)
- 2016 Her door stood open..., frontofbicycle pop-up show Oberer Rheinweg (Basel)
- 2015 Haupt-Ort für Gestaltung, frontofbicycle group show, site-specific installation (Basel)



- 2015 Galerie Katapult, frontofbicycle group show, site-specific cellar installation (Basel)
- 2014 Basel Art Center, frontofbicycle group show (Basel)
- 2014 JanKossen Gallery, frontofbicycle group show (Basel)
- 2014 Haupt-Ort für Gestaltung, frontofbicycle group show (Basel)
- 2013 Voice for Joseph Clayton Mills's CD and book, The Patient (Chicago/London)
- 2013 DOCK, Absatz Spitze postcard show (Basel)
- 2011 Unternehmen Mitte, 6. Postkartenfestival (Basel)
- 2011 DOCK: Multiples (Basel)
- 2009 Die Milch kocht, DOCK (Basel)
- 2008 Regionale 9, Austellungsraum Klingental at Kunsthalle (Basel)
- 2008 Portes Ouvertes, Melting Cellar (Basel)
- 2008 D'une page à l'autre, FABRIKculture (Hégenheim)
- 2007 Blätter fliegend und gebunden, Galerie Akademia (Sofia, Bulgaria)
- 2006 UNTER 2000.-, Ausstellungsraum Klingental (Basel)
- 2005 POLVO Magazine (Chicago)
- 2005 Ties, Images Gallery (Chicago)
- 2004 POLVO Magazine (Chicago)
- 2004 Meant to be Touched, TZ Gallery (Chicago)
- 2003 SAIC MFA Graduate Exhibition, Gallery 2 (Chicago)
- 2003 Fieldwork, 1926 Exhibition Space (Chicago)
- 2002 Artemisia Gallery with composer J. Chen (Chicago)
- 2002 My Words in Your Mouth, 1926 Exhibition Space (Chicago)
- 2002 Tic Toc Performance Festival, Columbia College (Chicago)
- 2001 Something Else radio program, WLUW (Chicago)
- 2001 Ladyfest Midwest with composer J. Chen (Chicago)
- 2001 Summer Solstice, Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago)

Honors

- 2016 Member of Jury, 'My Basel' Photography Competition, Basel
- 2003 John Adams Fellowship Award from the School of the Art Institute
- 1996-2000 Grants for Division 13 from the Illinois Arts Council, Richard Dreihaus Foundation, Etant Donné, Northern Trust, Kraft Foods, ExxonMobil & Kaplan Foundation
- 1999 Critics' Choice of Around the Coyote Festival for "Play"
- 1999 After Dark Award for Best Production for "Bloodline: the Oedipus/Antigone Story"