



# The Art of Enough

*Catalog*

## Process

When I was five years old, my father had a series of bipolar episodes that threw our idyllic suburban home into chaos. Seeking to cope with the upheaval, my five-year-old self created a story. The story went like this: if I could just be something different, something better, I could change all that had happened to my father and prevent bad things from happening again. Of course, no matter what I did, it was never enough. It was never enough then, and it was never enough for a lifetime. I spent my life constantly needing to do more, to be more. Luckily, society incentivizes one for such behavior so many times it was rewarding and exhilarating but as I got older it became exhausting and anxiety provoking.

*The Art of Enough* is a personal, transformative artmaking project. The process is much like my previous works where I used a multi-disciplinary, psychology driven creative process to become aware of, and then transcend, limiting patterns of emotions and behavior. Creative process is core of my work; it's a place where I seek freedom and spontaneity through acting, movement, voice exercises, therapeutic photography, video techniques, writing explorations and mindfulness practices.

Researching and creating *The Art of Enough* directed me to psychologists, neuroscientists, Buddhist meditators, and voice, performance and life coaches. These interactions led to me the awareness that my "father story" was just one of several stories that was driving my obsession to be more. It was part of a complex, messy, entangled, self-perpetuating psychological and emotional knot of stories and associations from childhood.

*The Art of Enough* helped untie the knot, resulting in a series of podcasts, photographic artworks and personal psychological and emotional change. I have been able to slow down, stop a compulsive need to always "climb the highest mountains", and most importantly been able to find moments when I consciously decide to say "no" in situations where I previously was subconsciously driven to say "yes". In many ways, it was about becoming more present and making more conscious choices, instead of always reacting to situations around me based on some inner voice that commanded me to "do more" or to "be better". I have done enough and now, in many cases, if I choose to do more it is because I believe it will result in more pleasure, more freedom and more connection with those around me.

Jay Sullivan

# Work

*The Art of Enough* is comprised of three series of artworks and a companion podcast series.

## Artwork

**All the King's Horses** - Trying to be enough by attempting to fix what is irrevocably broken.

- 21 photographs that intertwine self portraits with photographed assemblages.

**My Mother Made Me Laugh. My Father Showed Me How Things Worked** - Seeing what is whole by accepting what is broken.

- Mixed media installation.

**Small Surprises** - Living life as a series of small moments instead of big, intense experiences.

- Documentation from daily online postings. (in process - excerpts)

## Podcasts

The five episode podcast series details the psychology, neuroscience and creative process that is at the center of *The Art of Enough*. It features interviews with:

**John B. Arden, PhD, Psychologist and Author**

**Jean McClelland, Voice, Breathing and the Alexander Technique Coach**

**Robert Szita, Counselor, MS LPC TEP**

**Jean Claude Van Itallie, Playwright, Author, and Teacher**

My sincere gratitude to the interviewees and others who provided valuable assistance in the creating *The Art of Enough*, including project advisors Antonello Turchetti and Jean Marie Casabarian.

**[Podcast Home Page Can Be Accessed Here](#)**



# All the King's Horses

*Photographs*

*all the king's horses. podcast 3*

photograph 22" x 30"

2019







*attempting the impossible, podcast 1*

photograph 16" x 16"

2019



*brilliant but, podcast 1*

photograph 22" x 30"

2019



*the next mountains get higher and higher, podcast 1*

photograph, 22" x 30"  
2019



*living your life in great stress, podcast 1*

photograph, 16"x 16"  
2019





*but the feeling remains. podcast 1*

photograph, 16" x 16"  
2018

*we often forget about them consciously, podcast 1*

photograph 22" x 30"  
2019







*disentangling them seemed to be a good starting point, podcast 3*

photograph 22"x 30"  
2019

*to get them back together, podcast 3*

photograph 22"x 30"  
2019





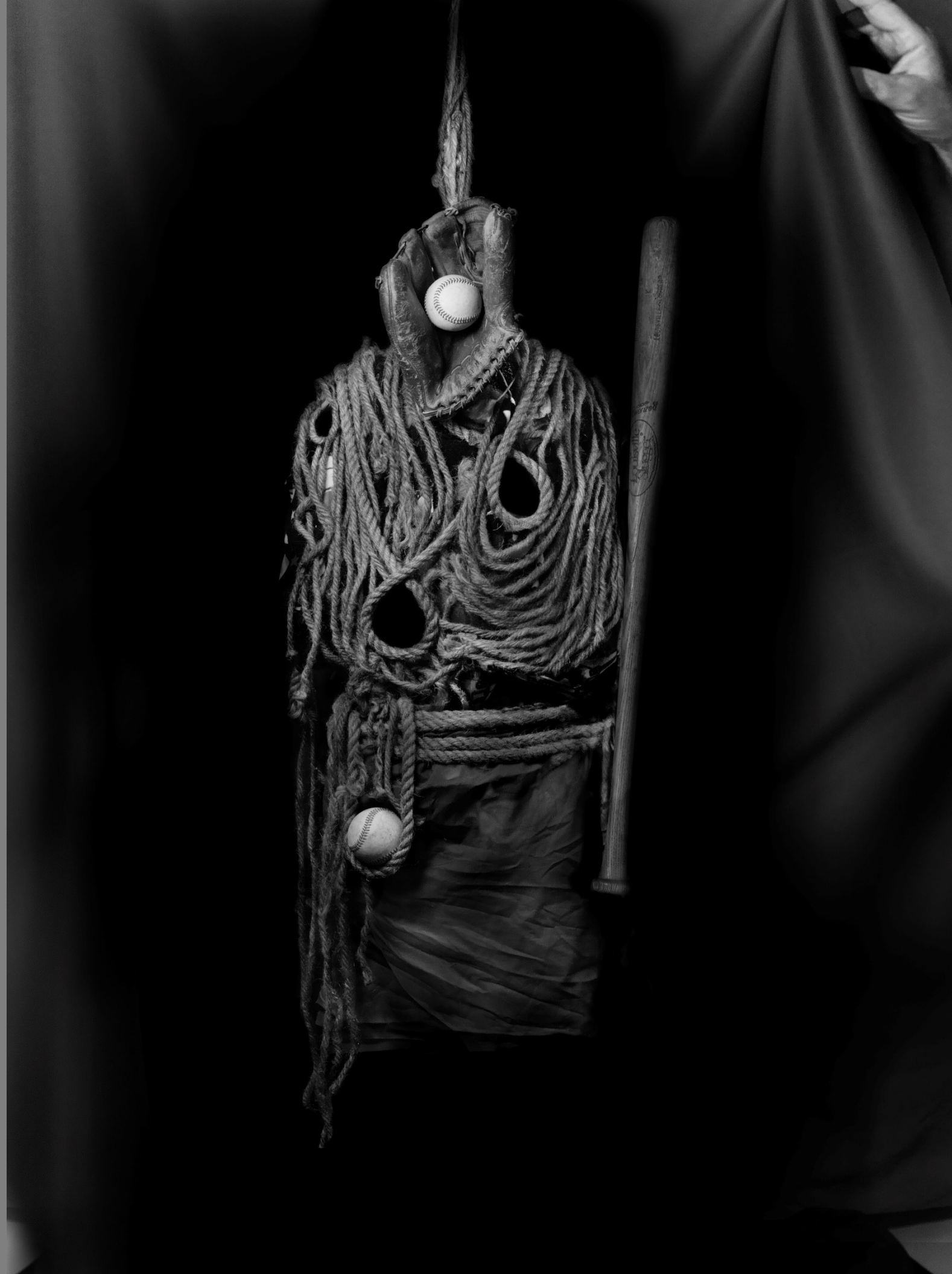


*among children who have experienced a  
loss of a parent. podcast 1*

photograph, 16" x 16"  
2019

*fault, podcast 1*

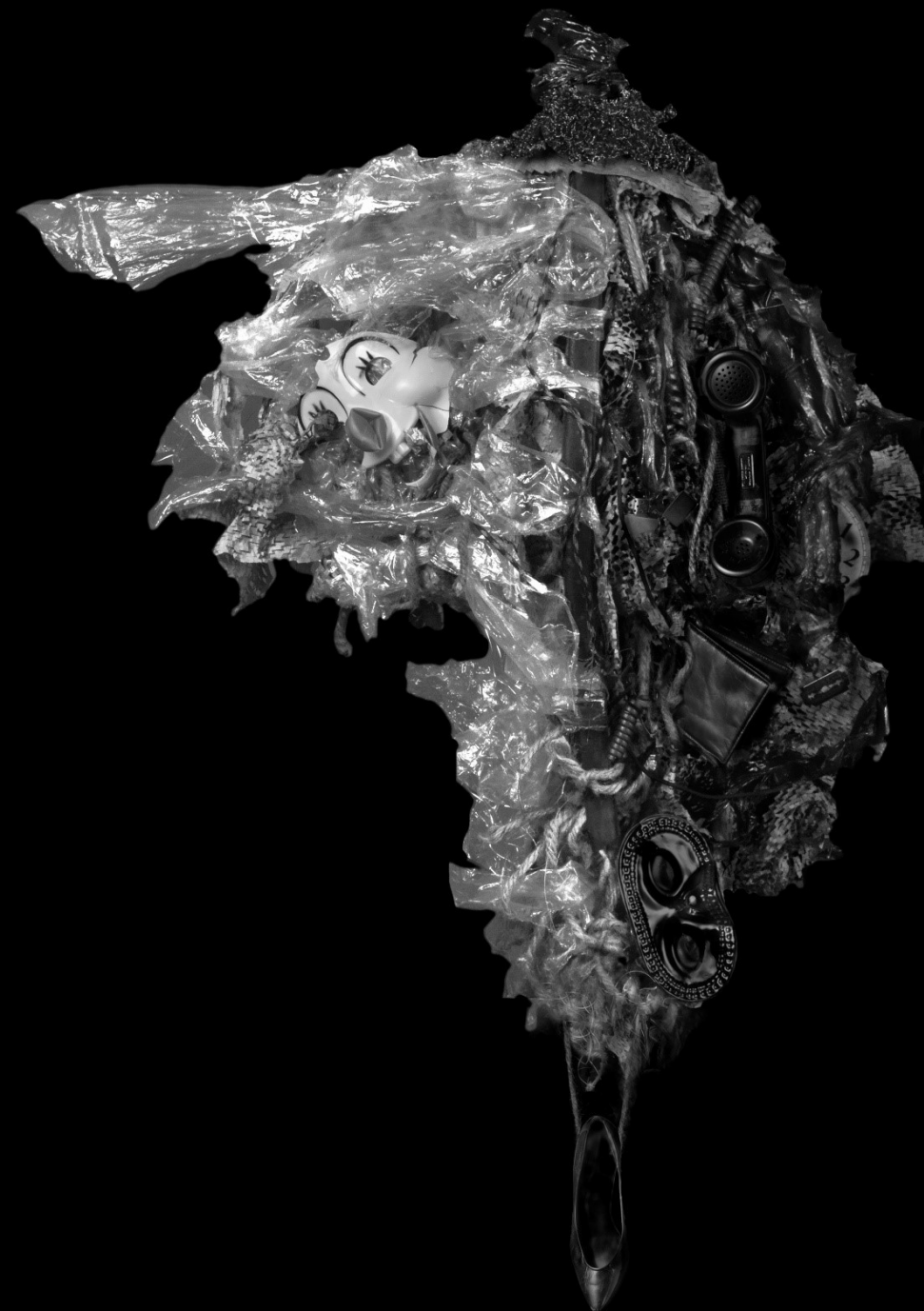
photograph, 22" x 30"  
2019





*fixer, podcast 3*  
 photograph 16"x 16"  
 2019

*two people, podcast 3*  
 photograph 32" x 40"  
 2019







*Awareness, podcast 3*

photograph, 22" x 30"  
2019



*unearthing this buried story, podcast 3*

photograph 16" x 16"  
2019

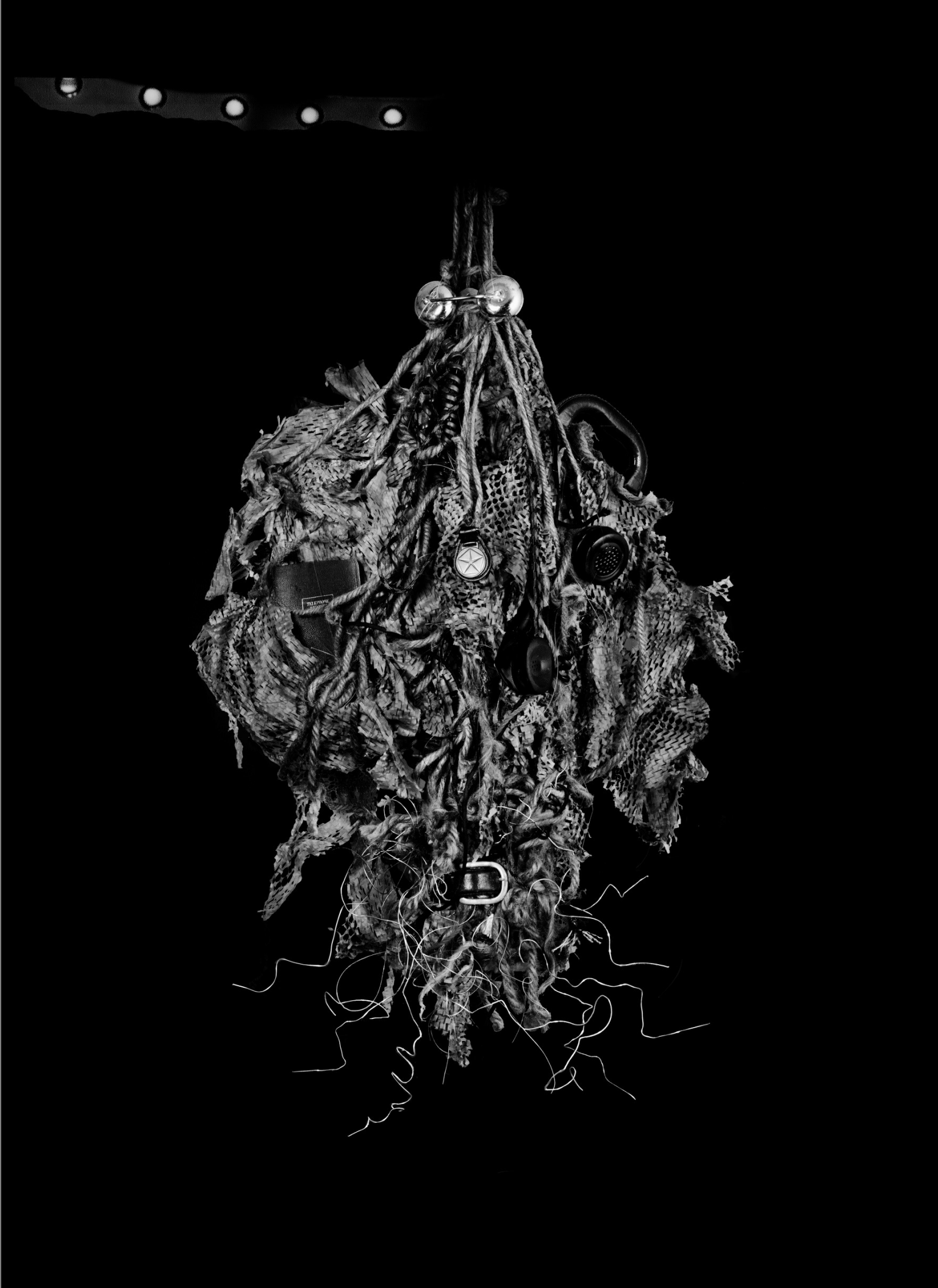


*spontaneously emerged, podcast 3*

photograph 16" x 16"  
2019

*another character, another narrative. podcast 3*

photograph 22" x 30"  
2019







*I didn't think, podcast 3*

photograph, 22" x 30"

2019



*I was in a state of flow for much of two weeks podcast 3*

photograph 16" x 16"

2019





*freedom, podcast 1*  
 photograph 16" x 16"  
 2019



*consciously choose, podcast 1*  
 photograph 22" x 30"  
 2019



My Mother  
Made Me  
Laugh



My Father  
Showed Me  
How Things Worked

*Mixed Media Installation*

*in a process  
resembling ritual,  
I cut away all the objects  
letting them  
fall to the floor,  
leaving  
one singular  
strand  
of  
brown twine.  
podcast 5*





*separate from each other,  
separate from myself,  
and disconnected  
from  
the pain of  
my childhood.  
podcast 5*



*my mother  
made me laugh,  
podcast 5*









# Small Surprises

*Year of Mindfulness*

*(in process - excerpts)*

*you should seek to have pleasurable moments during  
ordinary experiences, podcast 1*

*October 12*







**October 15th** *This is a sad sign.*

**November 18th** *Sounds I hear from beneath the covers on a Sunday around 6:00am: horn in the distance as a train passes by its the way to north New York City, ping-pong of pipes and creaking of floorboards as the furnace warms, neighbor's will need a new muffler soon car starts and pulls away, horn in the distance as the train passes by on it's way south to Bayhead, my heartbeat --- though I can't tell whether I am really hearing it or feeling it.*

**January 17th** *I am walking the steep sidewalks of San Francisco listening for sounds that I wouldn't hear on the streets of New York City. One climb up a hill to the next cross street. Then another climb up a hill to the next corner. Then another. Then another. Finally, I hear a sound that I don't hear while walking the flat sidewalks of New York; the sound of my own heavy breathing.*

**January 21st** *The cat knocks something off the dresser and it brings me to a being state of half awake and half asleep. I wake up a little more and realize that it can't be the cat because I am not home; I am in a hotel room in San Francisco. I fall back to sleep. Later I find out the event that moved a pen off the dresser and onto the floor was an earthquake . Okay...maybe that was a big surprise.*

**January 19** *It's 7 degrees Fahrenheit on this New Jersey morning. I have no gloves and when I touch the steering wheel it is really, really, cold. I wonder how the steering wheel can be that much colder than the air around it since by my logic the air temp should dictate the coldness of the steering wheel. Mr. Google tells me that it is the temperature conductivity of the steering wheel that causes the effect. The steering wheel plastic causes heat to be quickly removed from my fingertips making the steering wheel seem colder than the air around it.*

**January 13th** *There is another side to street signs.*



**November 14th** *The snow falls heavily outside my street facing, home office window. I see a boy of about 12 with backpack, shuffling by the house seemingly unfazed by the driving snow. He stops right in front of my window, bends down and picks up a handful of snow. He licks the snow as if to taste it. Apparently satisfied, he moves on while eating the snow much like one would eat an apple.*



**November 16th** *I mourn the loss of the colorful autumn leaves as I drive along the street; everything looks grey, cold, barren, dead. Then a gust of wind, and some dead leaves that were laying on the black asphalt street suddenly came alive. Five or so of the leaves dance above the blacktop like animated cartoon characters. I slow down and keep pace behind them. It's a study in playful movement; they come together as a leaf group dance and then they separate as each performs a leaf solo. The wind dies down and suddenly the delightful performance is over. I no longer mourn the loss of the colorful leaves; I mourn the loss of the wind.*



**October 21** *While walking the dog yesterday afternoon, I notice that he sees with his nose. I start to do the same and for a long while I see nothing except the overall scent that blankets the neighborhood. I pass a group of garden apartments and then briefly, in a kitchen somewhere in an apartment somewhere, I see someone baking a cake.*

**October 11** *Watching old black and white movies makes me feel as if all the characters are "adults" and I am seeing them from the viewpoint of a child.*

**September 16th** *Three most notable sounds heard while walking through the forest this morning: the wind rustling through the trees, my feet making contact with earth, the occasional creaking of my right knee.*

**September 5** *Just after dark, I am riding my bike through a housing development. It is late for dinner but too early for bed. Pools of street light dot the road ahead. Flat screens can be seen through the 3 bedroom, two bath street side windows. I come upon a black SUV just as a man opens the rear, curbside door. I look through the street side windows and see the man pick up a sleeping 5 or 6 year old boy off of the back seat and place him onto his shoulder. I smell something that I can't quite grasp, eluding me like a word that sits on the tip of one's tongue. My bike moves through the darkness between streetlights and just as I think the scent is lost forever, I taste a trace in the still, bike moving, nighttime air. Somewhere in the backseat of the SUV, among beach toys, blankets, and juice boxes, I sense there is a half eaten bologna sandwich.*



**October 30th** *Evidence that a cat played while we slept.*





**November 8th** I discovered yesterday that if I rollup my eyeballs as far as possible, I can see my eyebrows.

**September 20th** The road is a familiar route but I decide to see what on previous bike rides was unseen. I pass a house with a basketball hoop in the driveway, a padded safety mat is wrapped around the steel pool that holds up the backboard and hoop. Vertically, in large letters it says: "HUSTLE". It provokes a personal dilemma as I have consciously been trying to slow down in my life and now some subconscious urge wants to obey the directive to "HUSTLE". The dilemma is quickly resolved as I pass the next house; placed near the edge of the road is a sign with a graphic of a child that says, "Please Slow Down".

**September 28** The man in front of me leaves the semi-enclosed ATM space and I enter. Floating around in the air closest to the ATM is the smell of bubble gum --- Bazooka Joe from my childhood bubblegum! The image of a comic strip pops into my mind. (it was included with the gum.)





**January 31st** *There is a set of tiny footprints in the sand accompanied by a larger set. In my mind's eye I see a very small daughter walking along the beach with her Daddy. There are three tiny foot steps for each big Daddy step. At first the impressions in the sand are alongside of each other; daughter on right and Dad on left. Then they switch and then they switch again as if the daughter is dragging Daddy as she runs along the beach. The tiny feet disappear into an inch or two of calm surf and then out again. In again and then out again. This game continues for a long while and then suddenly the tiny feet disappear. The tiny girl is tired. She reaches up with her outstretched arms. Daddy picks her up and carries her the rest of the way home.*

**July 28th** *There are groups of people on a bridge in Berlin waiting for the lunar eclipse. The moon starts to rise and peeks from behind a tall apartment building. I hear somewhere in the crowd a young girl maybe 4 or 5 years old: "Papa! Papa! Schau! (look) Papa! Schau!".*



**November 10th** *Somewhere in the line in front of me I hear a little girl's voice; "I'm so happy!"*

**July 26** *My nostrils are wide open as I walk along a Berlin side street. I am sensing nothing except the scent blanket of the city, a complex mixture of smells that make none of them individually distinguishable. The overall effect is musty, hot and close. Then suddenly; citrus! Orange, so vivid, so bright it is as if an orange has been cut open before my eyes. What? Where? How? My eyes bring no answers so I retrace my steps. Here? No. Here? No. Here? Where? The delightful scent of the orange is gone, either down the street or over building or settled to the earth and with it the secret of its source.*

**August 6th** *I watch from a bench in the cemetery as people fill up water cans at a faucet and water the grave sites to protect them from the heat-wave. They are mostly older people and I realize it is a way for them to care for people who are no longer here.*



## About

Jay Sullivan grew up playing baseball in New Jersey. His life changed direction when, as a teenager, he received a film developing kit for Christmas. It started an interest in image-making that, along with a decent curveball, gained him entrance into Rochester Institute of Technology where he studied photography.

Jay went onto a 25-year career in New York City as a Producer and Creative Director. He created media for print, online, installations and live events. He's traveled to over 20 countries on four continents staging events and creating health related video documentaries which featured President Jimmy Carter, Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Ossie Davis, the Ye minority in the remote mountains of southern China, Bambara farmers in Mali, and teenagers in the ghettos of Sao Paulo, Brazil. His commercial productions have been garnered a Cine Golden Eagle, NY Festivals Silver World Medal, Silver Screen Award and other honors.

Since 2011, Jay has created photographic and video art. His work falls at the intersection of memory, psychology and creative process. He intentionally chooses subjects that challenge his emotional and psychological boundaries and then creates a creative process that helps him go beyond those boundaries. The creative process and its resulting effect upon the artist are the core of his work.

Jay has exhibited his work in the U.S. and Europe and has been noted by publications and organizations that include: *New York Post*, *ART Magazine* (Berlin), *@Curator* (New York), *Society of Photographic Education*, *Posi+tive Magazine* (Berlin/Venice), *FotoCult Magazine* (Italy), *International Bipolar Foundation* (San Diego), *Art Therapy* (Washington DC). Jay received a Master of Fine Arts from Plymouth University/Transart Institute for Creative Research in 2018.

[www.jsullivanartist.com](http://www.jsullivanartist.com)