

1995. The sky in New Mexico seems closer to the earth than in any other place I've been. Despite the fact that it was a hot summer day, the evening is cool, and the clouds have rolled in. It takes a few moments before I notice lights zipping through the air, just above the clouds. None of us can explain what we are seeing. One of the women jumps forward, lifts her arms up, and yells 'Take me with you.'

The alien: a quintessential loner. A character rarely understood, usually feared and often destroyed. Having resided in two countries, I have lived through feelings of alienation. I investigate aspects of social assimilation, and the ways in which people develop as they grow older. My work explores the relationship between personal identity and the complexities of a culture's extensive set of obligations and ideologies. Through the character of the alien I can indulge my interest in investigating the psychological experience of being 'other'. In much the same way that Mona Hatoum has articulated her sense of being separated from the core of events, the perspective in much of my work is from the outside.

The alien character is further explored within the archetypal setting of a family. I look at the relationships that occur within this structure and at the deterioration of its parts. In a similar vein to Yinka Shonibare's 'Alien Obsessive' I give selected characteristics to the alien family members. I am fortifying ideas that explore the creation of environments for these family members. Much like the work of Lee Bul, I am interested in art that entices the audience to physically engage with it. By creating interactive environments or communities, I attempt to subvert fear of the unknown, thus making the extraterrestrial and art itself less alien.

As a child, my eyes were wide open. The difficulty has been to maintain this enthusiasm as I have aged. My earliest fixations were spent viewing countless reruns of films like 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind', 'Flight of the Navigator' and 'Starman'. There is a fine line between fascination and obsession. My work with aliens and other paranormal concepts runs along that edge. My information is found through countless books, articles, films and websites. My research is also influenced by people who share their encounters or opinions. Within certain groups of contemporary culture, the UFO is viewed as a vehicle of redemption and escape. Other groups understand the alien/UFO phenomenon as a religious ritual, noting that both aliens and god are accepted on faith. Jung questioned whether unidentified flying objects are real or 'mere fantasy products?' He stated, 'If they are real, exactly why are they? If they are fantasy, why should such a rumor exist?'¹ It is difficult to give form to a history of paranormal accounts without documentary evidence for that history. Yes, the alien has a history in human consciousness and imagination, but there is no evidence for it, no proof. My art gives form to this history, a history of the mind, with some material evidence.

My work is referenced by the unknown, both by objects or ideas that don't belong in the environment in which they are found and by random access to memories of encounters and cultural exchanges. Having no interest in the everyday, but rather in what I dream about (when awake and asleep), my work directly engages my escapist desires. I have lived in South Africa and the United States, and have traveled in Europe. In all these places, I have sought direct contact with individuals and mechanisms which fascinate me. I develop and enhance these accounts by making objects and conceptually formulating ideas, while uncovering paranormal correlations between what is tangible and indefinable. My work is incubated in these arenas and is manifested in several media: drawing, painting, fabric, sculpture, printmaking, glass, installation and interactive communities.

¹ C.G.Jung. *Flying Saucers. A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959