

(The following is an online interview/discussion between AMUR initiatives and featured artist John Knight. John's piece in the exhibition took the form of a set of instructions and a direct transfer from his Chase Bank account to AMUR's acting Bank of the West bank account on October 12, 2013. It was stated that the amount transferred was to be used to buy fuel for transportation to the exhibition site. The digital documentation of the piece can be found [\[here\]](#).)

AMUR Initiatives: I was about to ask you how you felt about your piece being the only traditionally 'non-object'-based work in the exhibition. Do you think there might be a more accurate way to describe this piece? What made you decide against a more traditional object, as it were?

John Knight: I assumed early on that of all the works included would fall into some space between object and non-object based work. This developed as lacking relationship, or, a geographic distance with the Umpqua Dunes. I assumed, under the pretext of the exhibition invitation, that all participating artists would experience the same sort of lacking with the landscape—since all works were to be transported and documented on site by the curators. This assumption began as two lines of inquiry responding initially to the project invitation:

-How can I intervene with a landscape that I have no relation to?

-Can my lack of relation translate as a lack of distance via another's own experience?

To engage these questions, I began to blur my role as a participating artist in order to establish distance in my relationship with AMUR-Initiatives (existing only online at this time). I prepared directives that could generate for me, a new relationship to the exhibition site—a relationship that might be simulated or acted out by Amur-Initiatives. I decided that by investing in AMUR-Initiatives, a "safe" return might be garnered in the form of participating in the exhibition. This, in turn, could contradict my own lacking relationship by creating a "sort of" intervention—the helping to make possible of included artworks, artists and curators to intervene with the site. Ultimately, this work emerged as an emailed set of instructions that helped to fund gasoline costs.

AI: Essentially, you were not only a featured artist, but a benefactor of the initiatives project. Can you comment further on your decided role-blurring in the premise of this exhibition?

JK: Role-blurring seemed like an effortless strategy for an intervention. Because I am currently working outside of Oregon, it was necessary to admit to my own distance with Amur-Initiatives; as a project, and the exhibition site. My interaction with both parties, has only developed as a digital relationship in recent months. I liken this to what I perceive as the increasing dependence of my work to digital media platforms. This perception conflated distance—and a lack thereof—by acting out philanthropic maneuvers with digital posturing.

AI: From our curatorial end, we were excited that this piece unearthed some of the 'dirty laundry' of tackling issues of ecology, which always runs some risk of hypocrisy. We'd like to know, from your perspective, how these back-end particulars came to necessitate this work.

JK: It certainly appeared hypocritical to tackle such issues in a space I had little relation to. I felt that this hypocrisy was, at the least, an intrusion rather than an intervention. Again, with the emailed invitation to intervene at the Umpqua Dunes, I made another assumption directed at Amur-Initiatives awareness of hypocrisy. I decided to perpetuate this awareness by developing a project that could both, support the greater project—through the money transfer—as well as unearth the “baggage” that came with the project: the curators needed to travel to the site. In this work, the emissions of spent fossil fuels into the atmosphere thwarted any possibility for an intervention, leaving the site and surrounding area in a slightly less pristine state. I view this as an intrusion resulting in experienced/viewed paradox.

AI: The consideration was made to reject your transfer. How would this have changed the piece? Would it have possibly nullified it?

Nullifying the transfer seems, in hindsight, more in line with the guidelines of your initial invitation. This nullification may be a staged rejection that totally denies the exhibition. It would be a symbolic action and an anti-interaction with the land/exhibition. It could have served as an exercise in preservation through non-intervention—an intervention

Post-Script:

JK: I deleted your question on where value could be implied in this work. At this time, I would like to further contemplate value in my work offline, while also leaving it open to the viewers of the AMUR-Initiatives website to imply where it is placed. Though this deletion might, in and of itself, be a thwarting effort, I found that I have incurred an unexpected difficulty in developing language on this work. I wonder if this difficulty is provoked by paradox of digital distance? Perhaps my experience falls in an opaque space that I do not understand. It exists between object and non-object; between geography and digital screen.