

Biographical Artist Narrative

James Meyer received an MFA from Columbia College Chicago in 2001 in photography. His early work involved documenting the streets of his home in downtown Chicago, visually isolating views at street level. As a counterpoint, he was also fascinated by the rural Midwest, concentrating on old rural post offices and silos. He found that a 4x5 field camera enabled him to create a level of detail critical for documenting these images.

In graduate school Meyer turned inward. Still using the 4x5 he photographed objects in the house that he grew up in that were tied to vivid memories from his youth. He documented particular objects in a straightforward manner, overlaying the images with text to describe the memories and emotions associated with that object.

Meyer taught both traditional and digital photography at the university level for ten years. In 2003 he went back into the USAF to become a Flight Engineer on the C-130. While in the military he was deployed twelve times in support of both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Throughout these challenging missions, he continued to think creatively by shooting several hundred hours of video both while flying combat missions and on the ground during down time.

Since retiring from the military Meyer has combed through his journals and videos, extracting selections with which to create video and installation works. His goal is to clearly give the viewer a glimpse of the internal thoughts and emotions that he experienced during his deployment and describe how those have continued to impact all aspects of his civilian life. In this way, he will merge his technical skills of documentary photography with a visceral depiction of his military experiences.

This false starts of writing ...

After receiving an MFA from Columbia College, Chicago taught digital media at the university level for ten years. Meyer got bored and went back into the military as a flight engineer on the C-130, flying over 300 combat hours throughout the Middle East over 12 deployments. After retiring from the USAF went back to school thanks to the VA and earned an associates degree in web development. He missed the higher education environment and obtained an entry-level web developer position.

I have an MFA from Columbia College Chicago in photography. While deployed, I hung a video camera behind my seat on the C-130. I shot hundreds of hours of video with audio from the aircraft comms. As part of my journey, the VA paid for me to go back to school for an associate's degree. The most profound class I took was a Writing for the Web class, where I created a blog. This blog is where I get some of my writing and video out. This has been the start of using art for healing and sharing my experiences as a veteran.