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Cover Art: *River's Edge: Downward, Outward, Upward*

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

RIVER'S EDGE: DOWNWARD, OUTWARD, UPWARD

Jonee Kulman Brigham

Mixed Media: photograph, inkjet printed on presentation matte of colored pencil over photograph (2015)

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I describe my work as “art that explores the connection and flow between people and the rest of nature” (Full Spring Studio, n.d.). I work in a variety of media from artists’ books, two-dimensional works, installations, and public art. Drawing from my architecture background, I am particularly interested in the perception of infrastructure which guides much of my work to explore this premise: “I believe infrastructure, such as power lines and water mains, tells a story of how our daily lives are interconnected with nature—whether from a sink through pipes to the river, or from a light switch, through wires, to the sky” (Full Spring Studio, n.d.).

*Upstream of the faucets of St. Paul,
a white temple stands at river's edge.
Inside, noisy blue pumps slurp the Mississippi.
Outside, it is quiet.
(Full Spring Studio, 2015)*

This art work challenges a vision of division. The medium is an altered photographic image which suits my interest in exploring the stories that filter how we see the landscape. The triptych’s three views are from the balcony of the St. Paul Regional Water Services Intake building which I visited as part of the experiential design of a

water journey with high school students. The building is a simple, picturesque white structure perched on the edge of the Mississippi River. But it is also a place of hidden partnership, and of hidden continuity. Just below this balcony, water, in the form of the Mississippi River, is changed from part of the natural landscape into a resource input for our human-engineered water infrastructure. Below the apparent calm of the river's surface, water is sucked through grates into giant blue pumps with great force. From here it will travel through pipes, channels, and lakes to a water treatment plant to remove contaminants, and then will be pumped out to surrounding communities, ultimately to flow through somebody's—and my own—kitchen faucet. The same water that fish are breathing below the balcony will become a pot of tea. But the lines we draw—our demarcations—defy this continuity, this partnership between humans and the rest of nature. In architectural rendering, it is traditional to make thicker lines to define the edges of a building against its backdrop, so as to make its form stand out. We divide and subdivide and categorize the world, but beyond our divided vision, the world is one. I believe that a human-natural partnership of respecting relations grows deepest from an acknowledgement of our dependence on the rest of nature, and our membership within its flows and cycles. The dividing lines in this artwork are shown to question their division, showing the cracks in a broken view under repair.

REFERENCES

Full Spring Studio. (n.d.). FSSAbout.pdf. Retrieved from <http://www.fullspringstudio.com/FSSAbout.pdf>

Full Spring Studio. (2015, April 2). Full Spring Flow: Drawing Lines - Experiment in Altered Photo [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://fullspringflow.blogspot.com/2015/04/drawing-lines-experiment-in-altered.html>

