

artists tell stories (mostly about themselves)
Introductory panel

A *story* can be many things. At its most basic, a story is a narrative description of events meant to be communicated. It can be fictional or historical. It can serve as a factual record or be embellished to entertain. *Telling a story* can also be synonymous with fibbing, bending the truth, fabricating. In a story, time may be flexible; events may be presented chronologically or jumbled—whichever serves the storytellers purpose.

Authors choose a form: short story, novel, poetry; visual artists choose a medium: drawing, video, painting, collage, sculpture. Often, contemporary artists employ multiple mediums in a single work. Sometimes, the artist's actions themselves are the artwork. *artists tell stories (mostly about themselves)* straddles the delicate line between performance and making objects. For example, Jonathan Gitelson's *Garbage Can Project* is primarily performative—he repeated his daily surveillance for more than two years. The trash, videos and journals he placed in the gallery serve as documentation rather than an artwork to be judged on aesthetics.

The subject matter in Deb Sokolow's drawings closely mirrors her real life and personality. It is hard to know whether the work is intended to be earnest or duplicitous. William Lamson's nameless character in his solemn videos is played by himself—a kind of alter ego. To make sense of his muddled emotions, perceived helplessness and endless self-analysis, Andrew Kuo employs rational, logical structures like charts, graphs and diagrams. More delicately, Simon Evans's fragile collages and poetic text expose deeply rooted memories—some harrowing, some pleasurable.

These artists spin tales that defy our expectations. The stories are filled with plot twists, tragic characters and mysterious disappearances that entertain, frighten and inspire us. Very often, the artist reveals his or her own weaknesses in the process. However exaggerated, or carefully understated, each artist's story always returns to the same place—his or her own state of mind.