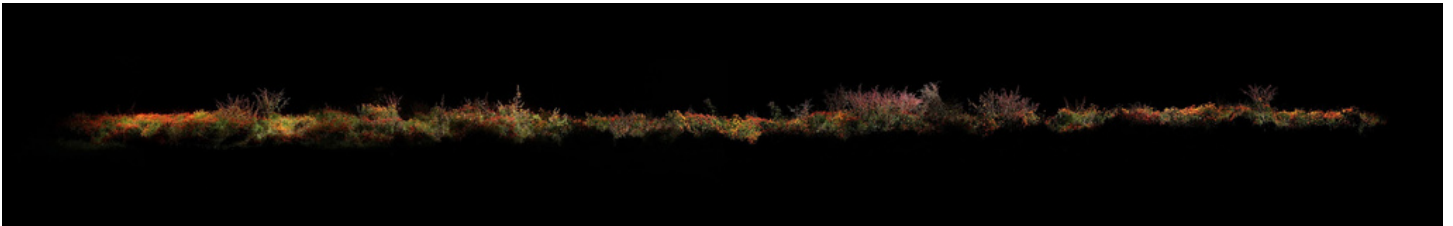




***He found me in the desert when I was  
the color of desert***

2020, 48"x72" archival Giclee print,  
edition of 10+2AP  
\$5,800

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(detail)

***There's a poem in my garden***

2020, 48"x320" archival Giclee print,  
edition of 5+1AP  
\$38,000

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To discuss the purchase of any artworks in the exhibit, please contact  
OZ's Manager of Artistic Programming, Daniel Jones: 617-356-2664 or [daniel@ozartsnashville.org](mailto:daniel@ozartsnashville.org)



***Altar 34°50'12.9"N 111°49'18.3"W  
(Dying played forward and then in reverse)***

2016, 32"x48" archival Giclee print,  
edition of 10+2AP

\$5,200

(Also available 48"x72", edition of 3+1AP, \$8,200)

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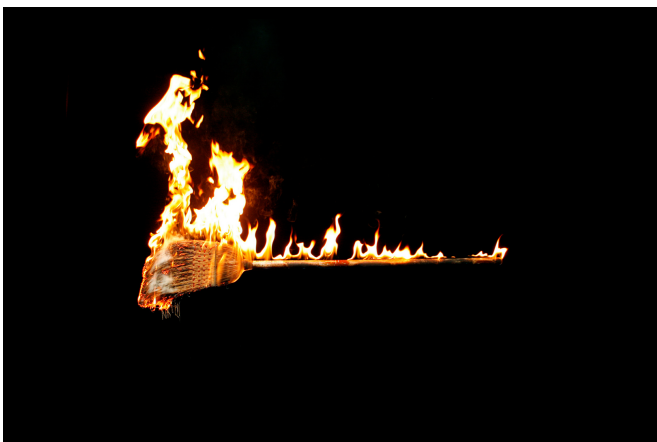


***And the night illuminated the night  
Benjy Russell & Rya Kleinpeter***

2012, 24"x36" archival Giclee print,  
edition of 10+2AP

\$3,600

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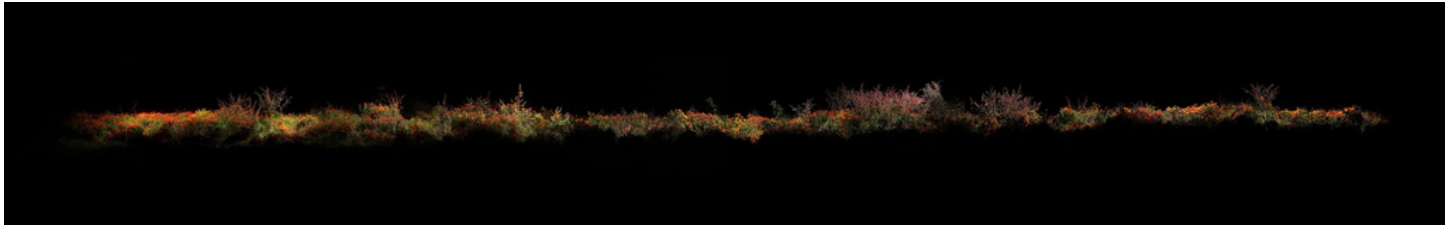
***Transformation of a broom, #2***

2012, 24"x36" archival Giclee print,  
edition of 10+2AP

\$3,200

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## The Story Behind: *There's a poem in my garden*

The titular piece in the exhibit, *There's a poem in my garden*, was made in the year following the death of the artist's husband, a former seminary student turned horticulturalist. This long-form work was months in the making leading up to the creation of the final piece. From the artist:

Six months before I photographed this piece, we had the memorial service for my husband Sterling in this exact spot. We never had a wedding ceremony, so I planned his memorial like I had always wanted our wedding; a big white tent, in the field next to our cabin, nestled in the hills of our little holler in Tennessee. It was beautiful with all of his friends and family in attendance who brought all of their most beautiful flowers from their gardens. We were finally having the wedding I had always wanted.

Once the field was charged with all of the love and intention, my neighbor plowed a strip down the middle of the field for a wildflower planting. I had ordered bulk wildflower seeds from a company that sold their seeds according to color. I planted them so that they would fade in a gradient of red and orange flowers in the East, to blue flowers in the West. We had a ceremony, mixed his ashes with the seeds, and told our stories of him as we planted them. It was hot, we were crying, and we held him in our hands and in our hearts.

It was beautiful to watch it grow. Very quickly there was green, then a red flower, and then a blue flower in the West! Then there was a flush of blooms almost overnight. I would go out there and talk to him all of the time. I loved visiting with him during the full moons when the light at midnight was so surreal.

I went out to photograph it on the night of October 23, 2014. It was to be the night of the killing frost, when the temperature gets cold enough to kill off all but the hardiest vegetation. I told him how magnificent he looked in flower form, and that I was there to take his picture. He hated having his picture taken, despite how handsome he was. The flowers were especially beautiful that night; deep in color and bursting with blooms. In less than eight hours they would all be dead from the freeze. The photo was taken at their peak, but also when nature had decided that it was time.

# About Benjy Russell

Benjy Russell is a self-taught, photo-based artist specializing in in-camera effects to achieve surreal and futuristic work that maintains and fosters ties to the land and the present. As a registered Choctaw artist, he looks to ancestral knowledge of our complicated histories for guidance in order to create work rooted in science fiction that can chart a path to a more equitable and compassionate future. Most of Benjy's work utilizes sculpture, studio lights, and mirrors to allude to magical realism – creating physical moments of impossibility.



Benjy grew up in rural Oklahoma, and currently resides in rural Tennessee. He has a background in construction and carpentry, informing the creation of sculptures that often act as subjects in his photographs. Enhancing the sense of magical realism, an ever-present additional character are the flowers and plants that grow at his home in Tennessee.

He says: "My work is mostly autobiographical and created from my specific intersectionality as a young widower and AIDS survivor of mixed and indigenous heritage who has lived in a rural area for most of my life. For the past 15 years, I've been a member of an intentional queer community in Tennessee where I've found a thriving and diverse group of queer and trans people to vision the new world along with me."

**Learn more about Benjy Russell at: [www.benjyrussell.net](http://www.benjyrussell.net)**