

REGIN IGLORIA

SEVEN SKINS



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

March 7–April 26, 2024

SEVEN SKINS

The title *Seven Skins* is derived from the theory that all the cells in a human body get replaced over seven years. Some take this to mean an individual becomes a new person every seven years. Igloria employs this framework in his exhibition, having gone through seven skins at forty-nine years of age. This show serves as a mid-life re-evaluation, reflecting on past interests, identities, and fascinations while determining the emergence of themes and preoccupations that remain prevalent in his work. Through the lens of dry absurdity, Igloria explores diverse topics such as survival, competition, and the Western iconography of the outdoorsman

Seven has become a fitting categorical number to Igloria, the last of five children and the seventh member of his family. The cornerstone of the exhibition is seven wall-hanging pieces, each with accompanying artist books. While the wall works are scaled thoughtfully, no larger than his human body, the book counterparts, set in the midst of the larger wall works allow for a more intimate reading. In tandem these twin works create a literal figure-ground relationship for the viewer.

REGIN IGLORIA

Regin Igloria is a multi-disciplinary artist who combines movement, materials, and space to speak about the human condition. He is interested in metaphors for struggle, primarily within the construct of social hierarchies as well as the physical, inhabited spaces such as public parks, cultural landmarks, and the common spectacle, all understood via themes related to *Nature*.

His relationship to natural spaces is informed through an urban upbringing; one encouraged by the romanticism of a Western value system. *The Great Outdoors* exemplifies beauty and awe but more often than not, *privilege*—the kind held by those in power as well as by those who do not—taints the artist's perception of it, making the search for happiness elusive. The gap between opposing forces becomes ever-widening in his exploration, especially as a person of color in white-dominated spaces. Here, construction hinders growth, accumulation betrays worth, and success replaces integrity. This is the continuous plight that drives me.

In his movement forward, he interprets walking, breathing, and athleticism as a catalyst to fulfill the body's need to fit directly into particular landscapes. Objects such as books, baggage, and structural landmarks designate arrival and departure. Travel is performed as both tourist and commuter. He participates regularly in solo and group hikes, practices mark-making with wet and dry media, and executes methodical, sometimes arduous rituals of process and organization. All of these actions reflect and mimic the cyclical order of the world.

By moving slowly, with guaranteed frustration and inevitable weariness, the artist makes his way through an interminable, beautiful landscape.

Regin Igloria is a multidisciplinary artist and educator based in North Chicago. His drawings, artists' books, sculptures, and performances portray the human condition as it relates to the natural environment and inhabited spaces. In 2010, he founded North Branch Projects, an organization that builds connections through the book arts. He works with various communities to create crossover between disparate populations and cultures, aiming to broaden the roles of both artists and non-artists. Igloria has taught at places such as Marwen, RISD, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Snow City Arts, and Carthage College. He received a 3Arts Next Level Artist Award as well as local, national, and international grants, support through artist residencies, and has exhibited internationally. He received his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design.

Website: www.reginigloria.net

www.northbranchprojects.org

Instagram: [@reginigloria](https://www.instagram.com/reginigloria)



The Hoarding, 2024, acrylic on forty-nine (49) shaped cardstock panels, mounted on wall painted Safety Orange



PR, 2024, Tyvek, acrylic, heat blankets, safety pins



Tree Reflection, 2024, acrylic on cardstock, and digital photo on nylon banner



Morning Mediation, 2024, acrylic on paper, cardstock collage on canvas



You Got Me Burning Up, 2024, nylon banner, camera tripod



Best of Seven (A Lake Michigan Encounter), 2024, acrylic on paper, cardstock, and canvas



The Warm of Moving Blankets, 2024, acrylic on paper, cardstock, nylon banners, and canvas



Seven Skins installation view

INTERVIEW WITH REGIN IGLORIA

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

Rachel Manlubatan: What do you find intriguing about struggle, age, and social hierarchy, and how did you initially start incorporating these themes into your work? How do these ideas dictate the ways in which you collaborate with others?

Regin Igloria: Struggle, age, and social hierarchy are completely intertwined, and I find their direct connection to survival very compelling. I never imagined my work would directly address survival until the pandemic because so many lives were compromised simultaneously. My reflections started with personal loss back in 2016, and then an onslaught of relentless moments that never seemed to let up through 2020 kept me questioning how I would make it through.

The themes have always been present in the work because I am naturally drawn to tension—the liminal space between joy and sorrow—so as I move back and forth, the movement became literal through formal techniques, not just metaphorical. I sometimes describe mark-making as walking on a switch-back mountain trail, zig zagging wherever you are led, and I imagine myself drawing a map that also describes the experiences of tension.

I was invested in movement for a long time, so I began to emphasize the physicality of these ideas through performances, which was always about the figure in the landscape. In between making sculptures and drawings and placing them in spaces that moved outside of a typical gallery or exhibition space, there was an open-ended opportunity to engage new audiences directly and interactively. It also creates opportunities for the work to go somewhere unexpected, much like improvisation through music or in a comedy skit.

RM: What messages do you think audiences

will receive when viewing your wall hanging pieces? What new information will they receive when viewing the book counterparts? What do you hope they gain from learning how to bind books themselves?

RI: I am interested in presenting multiple scenarios for the viewer, not so much as the offering of a message. Even though I rely on similar tactics used in advertising (in regards to shape, size, color, and formal considerations), design is used to maintain the viewer's attention, not to convince them to make a purchase. The time spent looking is used as a meditative technique, where I hope the viewer might return to experience new sensations. However, the method of selling a product isn't detached from the reason for producing these images meant for contemplation, so it seems I'm caught between virtuosity and greed.

All of the books I make are scaled for portability, so I am giving viewers an opportunity to further develop an intimate relationship with imagery. They can do it by holding the work in their hands, turning each page at their own pace. Or they might walk the book across the room to share it with one other person in whispered tones. I like the idea that there may be private discussions shared by only a few people, not an entire crowd or population.

When it comes to the process of binding, I believe craft allows one to transcend typical verbal forms of communication. In the act of stitching or folding sheets of paper into signatures, one really becomes aware of their presence in the here and now. They understand there is value in the things they've created by just making it. My favorite part of leading workshops is when someone finishes a book and tells me they are going to gift it to someone else; they know exactly who should receive it.

INTERVIEW CONTINUED

RM: How do you determine the media for a specific piece, from 2D collages to site-specific installations? How does manipulating scale, material, and design impact your perspective as an artist? How do you maintain a consistent voice through your wide, stylistic collection?

RI: I mostly think about scale and context, which determines the medium. For this exhibition, the scale was my height, 5' 6," which became a marker for what could "fit" in that scale. The limitations of scale are based on what materials I have access to, what is financially feasible, and how the work will evolve after the run of the show. This includes the possibility of re-using the nylon banners, for example, as the ground surface for newer works. Cutting things up is a pure joy for me, much like folding paper.

With the exception of *You Got Me Burning Up*, which is more a backdrop resulting in hand-held, mobile phone-scale images, I can stretch my arms to hold or "carry" the work with me. They are relatively manageable, can be rolled up, and don't take up too much space. That was very important to me. I told myself a few years ago there was no reason for me to make anything larger than myself—that I had to be conscientious of natural resources, labor, and the greater impact of what I put into the world—with full awareness that everything, content-wise, is much larger than me.

Even after I resolved to do so, I was conflicted, since the technology I used to make so many of the digital images were manipulated and composed on a tablet. There are so many hidden materials and costs that come with the production of certain pieces, and I could not avoid this altogether (printing commercial banners, for example, or just the use of acrylic paint which was not from a recycled source). In regards to maintaining a consistent voice, I try to keep drawing central to the presented

form. Is there movement in mark-making? Is there tension between forms? How connected or disconnected is the composition? And is the viewer given the opportunity to do the same? I am interested in presenting objects in spaces where these elements may be reconsidered in the viewer's world because they've never seen the relationship between those specific parts in such a context.

I would be excited to know that after seeing my work, someone may never look at a buoy out in Lake Michigan without thinking about the last time they fell in love, or they might reconsider why a moving blanket holds significance in their own life.

RM: How did reflecting on your life through the lens of "even Skins" shift how you view your artwork? Can you speak on how it influenced your own personal growth?

RI: Using the concept of "seven skins" as a way to reflect on my life was actually an opportunity to embrace non-judgement. This is very difficult for me, partially because my formal training was done at art school where all we seemingly did was critique. Culturally, my upbringing did not necessarily encourage open sharing of thoughts and feelings the way it is encouraged in those systems. Ego and feelings are left on the table, revealing parts that sometimes take a lifetime for one to realize as being part of a healthy process.

The opportunity to make this work opened a thick layer of vulnerability. It allowed me to use imagery I was probably too afraid to share in the past, particularly ones sourced from experiences I typically would not share with others. Topics about love and loss is not explicit in my work, but it has always been central to its origins and ultimately how I might connect with others.



THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

The DEPS Artist Profile Series presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community. The DEPS Artist Profile Series and graphic design is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: colum.edu/deps

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Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.