



**REGIN IGLORIA  
SEVEN SKINS**



# Regin Igloria

## Seven Skins

March 7-April 26, 2024

### Glass Curtain Gallery

1104 S Wabash Ave, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

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# Seven x Seven

By Lauren Iacoponi

The title *Seven Skins* is derived from the theory that all the cells in a human body get replaced over the course of 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.

Digital photo collages in Igloria's artist book titled *You Got Me Burning Up* include an amalgamation of G.I. Joe imagery from the toy's marketing campaign. Beyond nostalgia for a childhood toy, G.I. Joe saturated the media during the 1980s, through his formative years, and fostered a growing interest in survivalist thinking. Neither a critique nor celebration of the military, Igloria recalls G.I. Joe inspired an early interest in gadgetry tactical gear and provided a sense of belonging through its diverse representation of characters. Igloria's young mind also became preoccupied with thoughts of nuclear aftermath and survival with influences associated with growing up during the 1980's Cold War. Themes of atomic anxiety and survival permeate his work to this day.

Archive building is integral to many of the works on exhibit. Ephemera and the detritus of everyday life make their way into collage, displaying athletic equipment and garments, such as runner bibs indicative of competition. The treatment of such source material often becomes unrecognizable during the process. This type of assemblage style making correlates with Igloria's interactive book pedestals. The latest iteration includes mobile stations that travel to different institutions to offer free community binding sessions and share prompts for community engagement. During the course of *Seven Skins*, the interactive bookstations, in addition to being in the gallery, traveled across campus to different sites on Columbia College Chicago's campus.

*Seven Skins* is a return to drawing for Igloria. Punctuated throughout the exhibition are reminders that surfaces are worked and reworked, yet clean and precise. There is a clear editing of repetitive practice and synthesis of this repetition into singular works. While Igloria is tightly holding on to his process, his love of mark making reveals an interwoven fabric of his interests achieving a comfort with his own human scale.

# Landscape without Figure: On the Art of Regin Igloria

By David Maruzzella

Most of my time with Regin Igloria is spent outside. And that time is mostly spent talking about things other than art. This is likely because we're running, which makes conversation more difficult and often it is either very hot or very cold (during a recent run we did together it felt like -8 °F). But this is also because much of Igloria's source material and aesthetic references come from a domain seemingly at odds with the artworld: sports and athletics.

The titles of his works reference a macho world of jocks—*Best of Seven* (a reference to the number of games played in the World Series and NBA Finals) or *PR* (“personal record,” referring to one's own fastest time in a race or over a particular distance)—a world from which so many artists have taken refuge. Indeed, which two social groups are more opposed than athletes and artists? In the first half of the 20th century, many artists were enlisted in the military priming them to bring a highly masculine energy to the medium of painting, which in turn became more abstract, physical, and violent. Today, however, the figure of the artist and artworks are often associated with a different set of values: gentleness, demureness, delicacy, fragility, thoughtfulness, care. Perhaps the very predicament of contemporary art, as Boris Groys writes, is that artworks themselves:

*...seem to be genuinely sick and helpless—the spectator has to be led to the artwork, as hospital workers might take a visitor to see a bedridden patient. It is in fact no coincidence that the word “curator” is etymologically related to “cure.” Curating is curing. The process of curating cures the image's powerlessness, its incapacity to present itself. The artwork needs external help, it needs an exhibition and curator to become visible. The medicine that makes the sick image appear healthy—makes the image literally appear, and do so in the best light—is the exhibition.*

But unlike an artist such as Jonas Wood—who recently designed a special edition jersey for the Los Angeles Clippers and whose depiction of professional athletes verges on the naïve and innocuous—Igloria's work maintains a more fraught relationship with sport. Few are the references to glory, the thrill of competition, and celebrity. Instead, sport allows Igloria to tarry with consumption, violence, survival, and nature.

According to the ancient myth of Prometheus, human beings were overlooked when the namesake titan's brother Epimetheus was distributing various traits to animals. The human being, stranded without any natural means of surviving on its own, was given fire which Prometheus dared to steal from the gods. Fire, in turn, becomes synonymous with technology and knowledge, both of which come to buttress humanity's original lack. But there is a deep ambiguity in the Promethean legacy: it is precisely because humans are by nature without fixed natures that we must supplement our existence with technology. Survival is thus the fundamental condition of finite, precarious beings.

As Chicagoans know well, one must always be prepared for extreme and inclement weather. A competent winter coat is a necessity in addition to gloves, hats, and scarves. We gladly shed these prosthetic skins to go swimming in Lake Michigan—the site of near-drowning that forms the basis of *Best of Seven (A Lake Michigan Encounter)*—during summers that only continue to get increasingly warmer. Athletes and outdoor adventurers in particular are nothing without their gear, without base layers and rain shells, moisture wicking fabrics and insulated jackets, trail shoes and headlamps. Survival and consumption are coextensive. What humans lack as a species we make up for by layering our bodies with artificial furs, hides, and scales known as fleece, GORE-TEX, and ripstop. *The Hoarding* is comprised of forty-nine product tags and bits of packaging the artist saved from the various mass-produced pieces of gear that all athletes consume, destroy, and replace. After all, running shoes, to take just one example, need to be replaced after about 500 miles. To run across the continental US, Forrest Gump should have had five or six pairs of Nike Cortez. The need for gear provides athletics with an unmistakable aesthetic dimension, a desire to appear a certain way on trails and mountaintops. Exercise not only transforms our body—itself a kind of aesthetic pursuit—but it is the perfect excuse to scour Patagonia and REI for more products to outfit our newly transformed bodies. To enjoy the great outdoors, we must first go inside or online to shop!

Nature is often thought to be simple, self-sufficient, and intelligent, something we need to return to or something towards which we ought to look in order combat the excesses of society. Contemporary critical discourse has reinvigorated this view in an effort to center forms of knowledge that have been historically marginalized. But this romanticism about peoples supposedly in closer contact with nature's secrets is often exoticizing and empirically unfounded. In the worst case, this ideological view of nature is deeply conservative. The appeal to a fixed, sanitized view of nature from which humans have deviated—a view common in mainstream environmental discussions—is little different than the Christian doctrine of the Fall. That humans should live according to nature construed as an ideal model is the conceptual architecture of all forms of hatred and discrimination. Far from being an Edenic realm of harmony and equilibrium, nature is also equal parts violent and hostile, unaccommodating, indifferent. Many of the materials in Igloria's work signal his clear recognition of this difficult truth: the foil blanket used by marathoners to prevent shock following the extreme strain to which their bodies have been subjected, the utilitarian moving blanket that both protects objects and evokes the fate of millions of displaced climate migrants, the neon colors and reflectors most prominent in *Tree Reflection*. Igloria's materials and color palette reflect extremes in the broadest sense: extreme activities (marathons, skateboarding), extreme weather (and with it the need to pack up one's possessions and move, itself a constant and increasingly looming anxiety), and political extremism (the neon greens and yellows sprinkled throughout images of the January 6th Capitol attack are also the preferred colors of runners and cyclists seeking high visibility while exercising early in the morning and late at night).



There are no figures in Igloria's recent works. Instead, one finds only objects, remnants, remains, piles, collections, traces of the artist's present absence. The cartoonish explosion in *You Got Me Burning Up* intended to simulate the gaudy backdrops of action figure packaging interpellates viewers to become a part of the image by producing the most ubiquitous image of our time: the selfie. But the self of the selfie here is caught between the extremes of militaristic violence and the not-so-subtly disguised sexuality of the Pointer Sister's song "I'm So Excited." Sex and violence might be the two most powerful constituting forces in our world. But if they produce the selves that we then immortalize in images shared for all to see, Igloria's work also proposes a final, more nuanced and ambiguous perspective, one that is thoroughly naturalistic and materialistic. In particular, in the exhibition's title *Seven Skins*, which refers to the theory of cell regeneration and suggests that every seven years our body completely replaces dead skin cells with new ones. Perhaps this means the self and our identities are perpetually dissolved and reconstituted, that nature might really be indifferent to our existence and thus remodels us every seven years whether we like it or not. And perhaps one day—sooner rather than later it seems if the latest environmental projections are accurate—there will no longer be selves nor figures nor identities, but simply landscapes. Landscapes without figures.

## Regin Igloria: Seven Skins

March 7 - April 26, 2024

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Archive building is integral to many of the works on exhibit. Ephemera and the detritus of everyday life make their way into collage, displaying athletic equipment and garments, such as runner bibs indicative of competition. The treatment of such source material often becomes unrecognizable during the process. This type of assemblage style correlates with Igloria's interactive book pedestals. During the course of *Seven Skins*, the interactive bookstations, in addition to being in back the gallery, will travel across campus to different sites, including the Columbia College Library, the Student Center, ShopColumbia, and the lobbies of various academic buildings.

This project is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



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This project is an Arts Council Agor





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



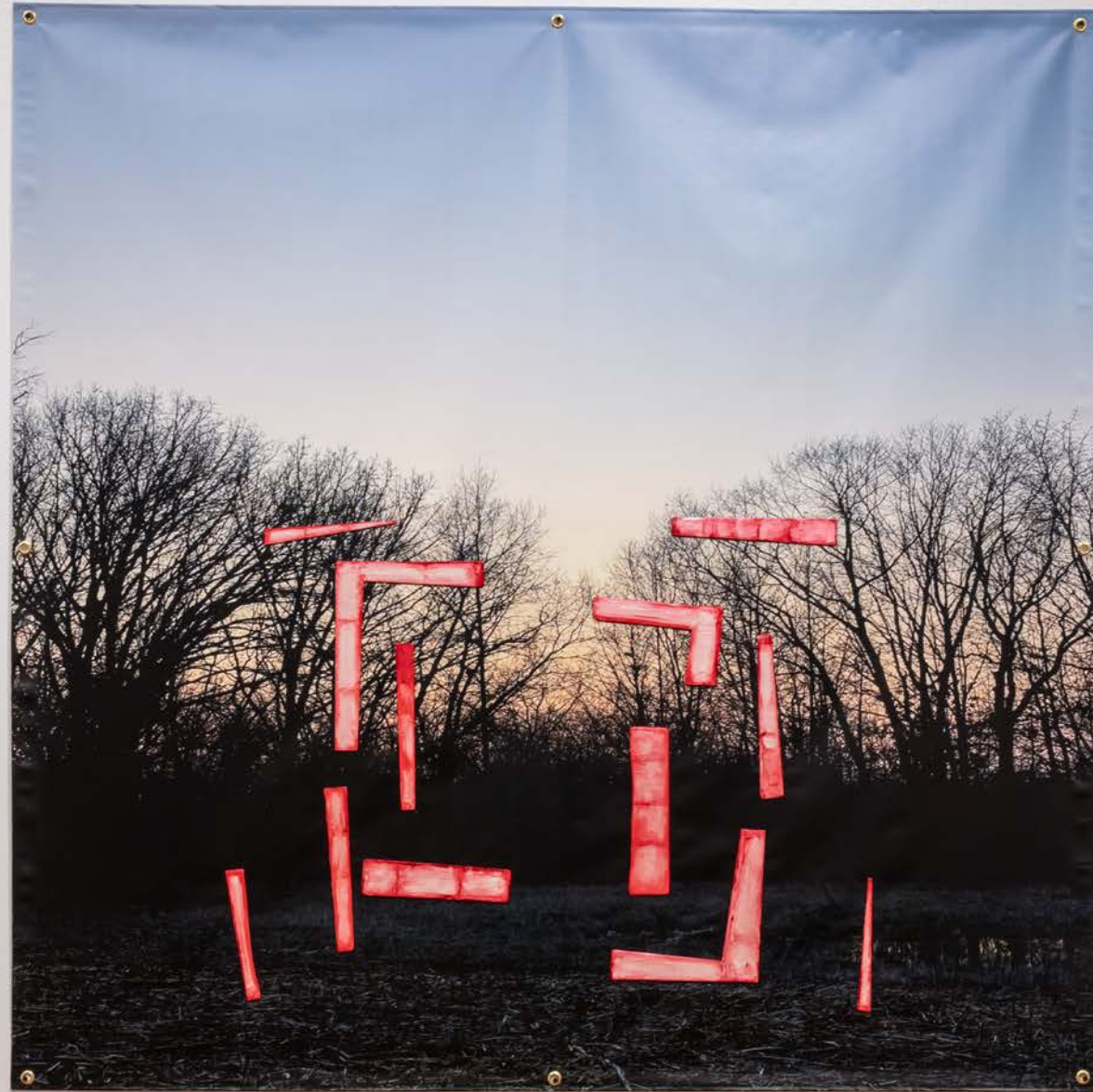
*PR, 2024*  
Tyvek, acrylic, heat blankets, safety pins





THE WARMTH  
OF  
MOVING  
BLANKETS

BEST  
OF  
SEVEN



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



*Morning Meditation, 2024*  
acrylic on paper, cardstock collage on canvas



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



*Artists' books 1-7, 2024*  
digital photo collage





Regio Igloia: Seven Skin  
Water / Ice / Earth / Sky



*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



# Everything on Wheels

Regin Igloria founded North Branch Projects as an artist-run organization that builds connections through book arts. Igloria's ongoing pedestal project, *Everything on Wheels*, was developed as part of North Branch Projects and serves as interactive bookstations. Those who chance upon them have the opportunity to share responses to question prompts by writing or drawing into the books. Over time, these entries are collected as part of the Neighborhood Archive, offering a glimpse into the world that makes up our community.

With the intention of creating anonymous, open dialogue between individuals, the books share ideas and give voice to anyone willing to pick up a pen. They provide conversation starters, engage strangers, and sometimes make us laugh. Collected content becomes a catalyst for future projects, collaborations, thematic class curricula, and meaningful discussions.

Each pedestal is custom-built using refurbished, salvaged parts and have unique features: some have space for an extra volume of books, others have storage for bookmaking materials. All are set on casters and intended to move to various locations and host sites. North Branch Projects maintains periodic visits to each site, replacing books as they get filled and displaying new prompts to keep conversations going. Viewers were invited to add to the community archive using the bookstations in the gallery as well as at the Columbia College Library, the Student Center, ShopColumbia, and the lobbies of various academic buildings.









**EVERYTHING ON WHEELS**  
An interactive book about the South Beach Project  
Please reply to the questions on the back of the book.

**Always Use**  
The information on this book is intended to be used as a guide only. It is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice. Please consult your local health and safety authorities for more information.

Since 2014  
The information on this book is intended to be used as a guide only. It is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice. Please consult your local health and safety authorities for more information.

**OPERATION MANUAL**

What comes after a left,  
a systemic failure,  
a spring change?  
Will it all remain...  
will it all be transformed?  
or will it be nothing at all?  
A left hand break.  
A systemic failure. A person.  
A spring change. A person.  
Will it all remain... who can say?  
Will it all be transformed, to have  
remained.

WARRANTY INFORMATION  
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WARRANTY INFORMATION

















# Biographies

**Regin Igloria** was Born 1974 in Manila, Philippines and currently lives and works in and around Chicago. He is a multidisciplinary artist and educator. His drawings, artists' books, sculptures, and performances portray the human condition as it relates to the natural environment and inhabited spaces. He founded North Branch Projects, an organization that builds connections through 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 Individual 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.

**Lauren Iacoponi** is an artist, curator, and arts administrator living and working in Chicago, IL. Iacoponi is the Founder of Purple Window Gallery and the Director and Co-founder of Unpacked Mobile Gallery. She serves as the Director of Exhibitions at Columbia College Chicago and previously served as the Exhibitions Manager at Elmhurst Art Museum. Iacoponi has over nine years of experience working as a fine art professional and is adept in independent curation, exhibition coordination, and fine art promotion. Iacoponi is keenly interested in the development of living artists, and actively promotes the work of emerging, mid-career, and under-represented artists. She has contributed to publications such as *Sixty Inches from Center*, *New Art Examiner*, *Chicago Reader*, *Chicago Artist Writers*, and *Discovering Art in Chicago*. Iacoponi received her MFA from Northern Illinois University with a Certificate in Art History and her BFA from Columbia College with a Minor in Art History.

**David Maruzzella** is a writer, editor, and translator based in Chicago specializing in philosophy and contemporary art. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from DePaul University in 2021 and previously studied at New York University and the École normale supérieure in Paris. He is currently the Collection and Exhibition Manager at DePaul Art Museum where he has helped realize exhibitions such as *LatinXAmerican*, *Stockyard Institute: 25 Years of Art and Radical Pedagogy*, *Learned Objects: Studio Works by William Estrada, Regin Igloria, Nicole Marroquin, and Rochele Royster*, *Remaking the Exceptional: Tea, Torture, and Reparations Chicago to Guantánamo*, *Solo(s): Krista Franklin, A Natural Turn: María Berrío, Joiri Minaya, Rosana Paulino, and Kelly Sinnapah Mary, Life Cycles*, *Selva Aparicio: In Memory Of*, and *The Image Pool*.

# Acknowledgments

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The artist would like to thank the participants in his ongoing pedestal project *Everything on Wheels* for their thoughtful responses to the question prompts.

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