Jim Jones visits HUD, Deb Sokolow’s Matrix 166. Sokolow’s sentiment seems to founder and lead followers to commit suicide. The popular adage “a mind is like a beautiful feather dress” is not unimagined. With his controversial subject links her to Jones. Members of Jones’s life. Sokolow’s passion is political science. Speier (now a U.S. Congresswoman) was in Jonestown that fateful day attack at the airfield in Washington, D.C. that signature subject.

At the age of twenty Sokolow witnessed the Jonestown massacre in spy movies. Sokolow is a different man experiencing the location for the first time. Virtually anywhere is an impulse for Sokolow.

Part truth, part fiction on well-researched material. The artist identifies a “secondary” text, a well-researched paper, like a superimposed diagram, and makes it matter: the large, “secondary” text of thinking; and an
Jim Jones visits Hartford, Connecticut, during his fictional run for Congress, in artist Deb Sokolow’s MATRIX project titled Some concerns about the candidate. The title’s sentiment seems warranted when invoking the name of Jim Jones, the notorious founder and leader of the People’s Temple cult, who persuaded hundreds of his followers to commit mass suicide at their Jonestown, Guyana, commune in 1978. The popular adage “drinking the Kool-Aid” — or having blind obedience — originated from this unimaginable tragedy, resulting from the consumption of a grape-flavored beverage spiked with cyanide. The horrific event also marked the climactic end of Jones’s life.

His troubling life has long fascinated Chicago-based artist Deb Sokolow. Her text-and-image-based narrative drawings often focus on well-known cultural figures, controversial subjects, and conspiracy theories. Furthermore, her biography indirectly links her to Jones. Sokolow grew up in Davis, California, also the hometown of several members of Jones’s inner circle. Her mother was a writer and journalist, as well as a passionate reader of mysteries, thrillers, and spy novels. Her father was a professor of political science at the University of California, Davis. Among his students was Jackie Speier (now a U.S. Congresswoman), who would go on to serve as an aid to Leo Ryan, the U.S. Congressman shot and killed by Jones’s men while on the fact-finding mission to Jonestown that precipitated the mass suicide. Speier was wounded in the same attack at the airstrip. Sokolow herself briefly worked for a U.S. Congressman in Washington, D.C. And the nation’s capital is also the site of inspiration for Sokolow’s signature subject matter.

At the age of twelve, while eating with her mother at a McDonald’s in Washington, D.C., Sokolow witnessed a life-altering incident — the classic briefcase exchange featured in spy movies. Sokolow saw one man go into the restroom with a briefcase and a different man exit with it. Her world has never been the same. If a McDonald’s can be the location for an undercover hand-off, such secret activities could take place virtually anywhere, and likely do. This actual briefcase exchange became the creative impulse for Sokolow’s art. 1

Part truth, part fiction, and part comedy. Sokolow’s complex visual tales are based on well-researched facts expanded by the fantastical mind of the narrator, who the artist identifies as “you,” making the reader/viewer an active participant in the almost-convincing events. Sokolow presents the story on large panels or sheets of paper, like a super-size comic book that has been taken apart and spread across the walls of a gallery. Collaged and drawn images — including portraits, photographs, diagrams, and maps — accompany the awkward, handwritten text. The size of the text matters: the largest text, or “primary” narrative voice, tells the main story; the smaller “secondary” text conveys what you (as the paranoid or unreliable narrator) are thinking; and an even smaller “tertiary” text reveals what you are really thinking but
gress, in artist Debra Sokolow’s Notes on Denver. The title’s connotations harken to the notorious and controversial events of his untimely death in 1978.

Sokolow’s work documents her studio and the artist’s end of the story; the smaller text is the larger text. Her characters and cultural figures, such as a rock band (The Doors of Perception), as well as a famous professor of the arts and a director, were Jackie Kennedy, Leo Ryan, and H.R. Humes, respectively, in the same location. The story emanates from a town of several official USPS vehicles and an official USPS Vehicular Security Prisoner Transfer Van, as well as a meth lab in your car as you explore Washington, D.C.

The narrator and the candidate — in a contentious U.S. election — would never dare to let the paranoid narrator take place. The narrator, who the reader can interpret in the story, is based on sheets of graphite smudge (declassified government documents). Some of Sokolow’s work documents the artist’s studio, which is featured in the story. The story emanates from the paranoid narrator’s mind, as well as a meth lab in your car as you explore Washington, D.C. Sokolow’s work investigates a lot of issues: the paranoid narrator’s mind, a meth lab in your car as you explore Washington, D.C. Sokolow’s work documents the artist’s studio, which is featured in the story. The story emanates from the paranoid narrator’s mind, as well as a meth lab in your car as you explore Washington, D.C.

The author of this work, Debra Sokolow, has described the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, as a character of the paranoid narrator. The paranoid narrator has great lengths to keep the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, from making a win in an upcoming election. The paranoid narrator is a character of the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, and the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, has great lengths to keep the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, from making a win in an upcoming election. The paranoid narrator is a character of the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, and the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, has great lengths to keep the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, from making a win in an upcoming election. The paranoid narrator is a character of the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, and the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, has great lengths to keep the candidate, Jackie Kennedy, from making a win in an upcoming election.

Debra Sokolow’s work documents the artist’s studio, which is featured in the story. The story emanates from the paranoid narrator’s mind, as well as a meth lab in your car as you explore Washington, D.C.
would never dare verbalize. The artist’s hand is intentionally imperfect, with the graphite smudged, covered with Wite-Out™, and even masked by black bars, mimicking declassified government documents.

Some of Sokolow’s past projects provide context for this new work. In 2010, she created You tell people you’re working really hard on things these days, a five-panel work documenting the activities in and around the Chicago building that houses the artist’s studio, which happens to overlook a central office of the U.S. Postal Service. The story emanates from a highly detailed floor plan of the studio building and its environs. At all hours, from your studio window (while you are “working hard”) you witness mysterious packages being loaded into the trunk of a red car, and not an official USPS vehicle. A postal worker patrolling the parking lot resembles Ismael Zambada García, the leader of the Sinaloan drug cartel, whom you recognize from the newspaper. These first-hand observations are combined with local news reports of Zambada’s son being held in Chicago on drug trafficking charges and the discovery of a meth lab in your neighborhood. Is the Post Office involved in the transportation of drugs? From there, the plot thickens.

In Notes on Denver International Airport and the New World Order (2011), Sokolow investigates a long-held conspiracy theory that Denver’s huge new airport, opened in 1995, included a covert project to construct an underground bunker to serve as the headquarters in the western hemisphere for the New World Order, a totalitarian one-world government. A sixteen-hour site visit to the airport by the artist (or “you” as the paranoid narrator in the artwork) results in being tracked through the terminal as you take photographs, then followed into a restroom, and finally trailed in your rental car as you explore the airport’s perimeter, confirming your many suspicions.

The narrator and timely subject of Sokolow’s MATRIX project—Some concerns about the candidate—were inspired by the artist’s site visit to Hartford, and the recent, contentious U.S. Presidential election. At the beginning of the project, the artist described the concept:

The author of this story (…only referred to as “you” throughout the narrative) is a naïve campaign worker who becomes increasingly concerned about the behavior of the candidate, Jim Jones, and the campaign’s questionable tactics used to secure a win in an upcoming U.S. Congressional election. The story is fiction, but the character of the candidate—Jim Jones—will be based on real-life People’s Temple cult leader Jim Jones, the mind control tactics he used on his followers and the great lengths he went to in order to exert influence over politicians and others in California in the 1960s and 1970s. Also, a fictional, illusion-making campaign consultant featured in the story, named David Copperfield, will be loosely based on the real-life master illusionist, David Copperfield.
In 2010, she created a five-panel installation that houses the Postal Service. The artist (or "you" as the terminal addresses you) and not an official recognizes from the reports of the discovery of the Oregon port, opened in 1990, Sokolow's People's Temple, and others in the campaign closely based

concerns about the recent, the artist

narrative) is a responded to secure

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but the
RUMOR AROUND HEADQUARTERS IS COPPERFIELD
USED TO DO SOME SORT OF MAGIC ACT
BEFORE HE STARTED WORKING FOR TIM

JIM'S NEW CAMPAIGN
CONSULTANT

HE CALLS OUR GUARD "LIEUT.
COPPERFIELD"

TODAY GIVES ONT HELP IN
SOMETHING...
[Set in the present day,] a portion of the story will take place inside and outside the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art when the campaign worker records how candidate Jim Jones journeys to Hartford to give a speech, as John F. Kennedy did on the eve of his U.S. Presidential election in 1960, on the terrace of The Hartford Times building. Before the speech, Jones, with delusions of grandeur, gazes up at the image of Kennedy in Robert Rauschenberg’s iconic painting “Retroactive I” (1964), which prominently hangs in [the museum’s] Morgan Great Hall.1

“Some concerns about the candidate” will be tangential, subjective and at times illogical, and will not be as much of a commentary on politics as it will be an exploration into human nature and the cult of personality phenomenon.4

Sokolow’s mixed-media contemporary work, accompanied by gripping scenes in perfect balance and an exciting new visual approach, combines a great deal of the most entertaining aspects of his art.

PATRICIA HICKSON
Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art
Sokolow’s mixed-media drawings present ambitious visual tales on the order of the most entertaining mysteries and spy novels, with all the plot twists and turns. The accompanying imagery animates and heightens the drama, bringing to mind the most gripping scenes in film noir and political thrillers. But the books, with their depth and detail, are always better than the movie adaptations. And Deb Sokolow strikes the perfect balance as both a brilliant storyteller and innovative visual artist. She combines a great read with iconic pictorial moments and, in the process, delivers an exciting new vision for narrative drawing.

PATRICIA HICKSON
Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art
DEB SOKOLOW

EDUCATION

2004 MFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
1996 BFA, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 Some concerns about the candidate / MATRIX 166, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
2012 All Your Vulnerabilities Will Be Assessed, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
2011 Notes on Denver International Airport and the New World Order, Abrons Art Center, New York, NY
The Green Gallery West, Milwaukee, WI
2010 Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 Drawing Time, Reading Time, The Drawing Center, New York, NY
2012 Big Reality, 319 Scholes, Brooklyn, NY, curated by Brian Droitcour
2011 Artists tell stories (mostly about themselves), Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ
Drawn to Disaster, Institute of Contemporary Art, Maine College of Art, Portland, ME
in- and outside - writing, Voorkamer, Lier, Belgium
Terminal Jest, co-curated by Stamatinia Gregory and Michael Hall, Delaware County College, Media, PA
2009 Ground Level Projects: Deb Sokolow, Spertus Museum, Chicago, IL
2008 You are one step closer to learning the truth, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO
The trouble with people you don’t know, Inova (Institute of Visual Arts), Milwaukee, WI
2005 Someone tell Mayor Daley, the pirates are coming, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

COMMISSIONS

2011 Cover, spread for Paletten Art Magazine (Sweden), guest-edited by Maria Lind

BIBLIOGRAPHY


AWARDS, RESIDENCIES

2012 ARTADIA: The Chicago grand prize winner: Residents, Norsk Dalsåsen, Nord-Trøndelag, Norway

COLLECTIONS

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

WORKS IN THE ESTATE

All works courtesy the artist, Western Exhibitions, Chicago

Some concerns about the order of the day, mixed media on six panels, 50 x 38 in. (each panel)
Jim Jones: A Man With A Plan, Artist book; mixed media, 9 x 6 in. (closed)

WORKS ON VIEW

A Walk In Nature Or Telling Tales, 2013
Artist book; mixed media, 9 x 6 in. (closed)
American, born 1974, Davis, California  
Lives and works in Chicago, Illinois

COLLECTIONS
Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Scottsdale, AZ  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

Chicago Tribune. Viera, Lauren. “More Brilliance from Deb Sokolow” (review), May 29, 2009

BIBLIOGRAPHY
2011  
2010  
2009

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, AND FELLOWSHIPS
2012 ARTDIA: The Fund for Art and Dialogue, Chicago grant cycle  
Residency, Nordisk Kunstnarssenter Dalsåsen, Norwegian Ministry Of Culture, Norway

ARTIST TALK
MATRX Gallery Talk  
Some concerns about the candidate  
Deb Sokolow  
Thursday, February 7  
6 pm  
Sokolow will discuss Eleanor H. Bunce Gallery

MEMBER MORNING
MATRX Gallery Talk  
Brainwashing and Memory  
Patricia Hickson, Emily Miller, contemporary art  
Friday, February 15  
9 – 11 am  
Hickson will discuss some concerns about the candidate.  
Members Only. Reservations required.  
Call 860.838.4171

WORKS ON VIEW IN THE AUEBACH ART LIBRARY AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM
2013  
2013

WORKS ON VIEW IN THE AUEBACH ART LIBRARY AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM
2012

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, AND FELLOWSHIPS
2010  
2009

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION
All works courtesy the artist & Western Exhibitions, Chicago.  
Some concerns about the candidate, 2013  
Mixed media on six panels  
50 x 38 in. (each panel)

Artist book; mixed media on paper  
9 x 6 in. (closed)

The Truth About David Copperfield, 2013  
Artist book; mixed media on paper  
9 x 6 in. (closed)

Related ephemera: The briefcase of David Copperfield, suit scraps, pendant

A Walk In Nature Or The Faces Of Former Bosses, 2013  
Artist book; mixed media on paper  
9 x 6 in. (closed)

Treasures Found Inside The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 2013  
Artist book; mixed media on paper  
9 x 6 in. (closed)

Elegant Events

The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, Bloomington, IN

Sokolow created an accordian comic strip. April 2010  
ARTBIBLIOGRAPHY  
2008 Kansas City Star. Thorsen, Alice. “Kemper mystery exhibit is a you-dunit” (review)  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Schumacher, Mary Louise. “Miranda July meets Mark Lombardi”  
Art Papers. Elms, Anthony. “Deb Sokolow” (review)

The Wadsworth Athenueum sponsored by the Mandel Foundation, Inc.

The MATRIX program is a founding member of the Association of American Art’s Contemporary Co-ops.

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The Wadsworth Athenaeum is supported by grants from ARTDIA: The Fund for Art and Dialogue, Chicago grant cycle  
Residency Nordisk Kunstnarssenter Dalsåsen, Norwegian Ministry of Culture, Norway
**ARTIST TALK**

**MATRIX Gallery Talk**

**Some concerns about the candidate**

Deb Sokolow

Thursday, February 7

6 pm

Sokolow will discuss her MATRIX project in the Eleanor H. Bunce Gallery.

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**MEMBER MORNING | CURATOR TALK**

**MATRIX Gallery Talk**

**Brainwashing and Magic Spells**

Patricia Hickson, Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art

Friday, February 15

9 – 11 am

After a complimentary continental breakfast, Hickson will discuss Sokolow’s use of truth and fiction, comic book strategies, and conspiracy theories in her MATRIX project *Some concerns about the candidate*.

Members Only. Reservations Required. Call 860.838.4171

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**FILM SERIES | “SPY THIS!”**

Friday, February 15 – Saturday, March 30

Deb Sokolow’s MATRIX project *Some concerns about the candidate* is a commentary on politics, mind control, and human nature. During February and March we explore nine thrillers that deal with politics, corruption, and the human condition. Film discussions follow screenings. Film admission includes admittance to the MATRIX exhibition. For film titles and times, visit: www.wadsworthatheneum.org

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**WA MATRIX 166 Brochure-3_WA MATRIX 166 Brochure 1/15/13 1:47 PM Page 12**

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2. Project proposal submitted via email by the artist to the author, 2 June 2012.

3. Ibid.

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**WADSWORTH ATHENEUM**

Wadsworth Atheneum

Support the Wadsworth Atheneum film program is generously sponsored by the Mandell Family and Data-Mail.