

▶ART

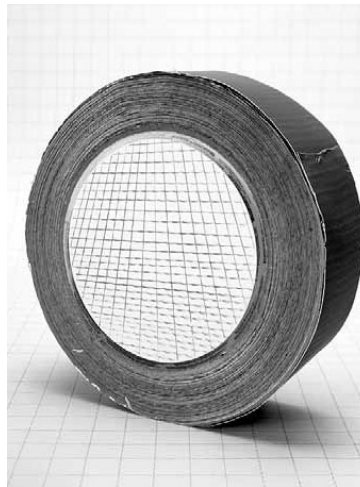
"What is there?" Recent Works by Justin Baker and Danny Goodwin

Object Oriented Ontology, also known as "Speculative Realism", occupies a new philosophical position in logical space, attempting to define a set of theses about all that is. According to proponents of "OOO" (as the cool kids dub the doctrine), objects are all that there is. And there are a lot of them. You're an object; I'm an object; and all the crap between you and me, both living and nonliving, are objects. Under OOO, the conventional hierarchy of living matter vs. nonliving matter is effectively obliterated. Everything—people, potted plants, potholes, porn star posters, rolls of duct tape, and more—is an object that is scattered across the savannah of existence. All are equal and all are on the same plane, ontologically speaking.[1] This "weird realism"

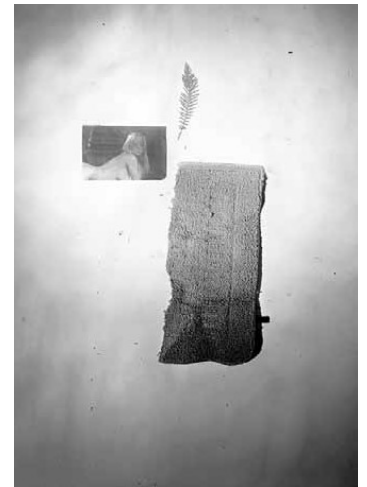
(as the founder of OOO, Graham Harman terms it) is an apt way of thinking about the "stuff" of the Anthropocene. Much of the matter that is carved up into discrete objects, each with its own epistemological and ontological status, will continue to exist in the post-human, weird world of a radically altered climate long after we've managed to render ourselves extinct. By training their lenses on the objects and assemblages of the Anthropocene, photographers Justin Baker and Danny Goodwin offer a glimpse into an alternate, speculative reality of the World of Things.

Baker's still-life images, made with an ancient 8x10" wooden view camera, invites the viewer not only to stare at the arrangements of quotidian ephemera he's gathered and presented, but to space out, drift off, and dream. In fact, to test the elasticity of that metaphor, his work more precisely resides in the space between waking and dreaming—whether drifting off or coming to. The paradox of coming to grips with something by letting go more completely is laid bare—diagrammed, in fact. Just follow the easy-assembly instructions and add water.

For Goodwin, the object is currency, part of a systematic staging. His photographs translate our believability of ob-



Left: Danny Goodwin's "Duct Tape Decoy" (2014). Right: Justin Baker's "Savannah, fern and rug" (2014).



jects into an imitation of, or detour into, what we think we see. Hand-constructed environments and objects impersonate their virtual counterparts and reveal the circular logic that undergirds much of the current popular fascination with 3D printing and the "internet of things." The familiar checkerboard grid of a transparent layer in Photoshop, which is now more a signifier of empty space than actual empty space, represents more than

a passive, benign background and in fact, serves as a segue to an interrogation of veracity, photographic or otherwise.

Goodwin will deliver a talk entitled "Beginning the End: Picturing the Anthropocene" at 7 p.m. on Jan. 7. On Jan. 21 Goodwin will be joined by Justin Baker in conversation at 5 p.m. with a closing reception from 6-8 p.m. Both events take place at LABspace, located at 2642 NY-23, Hillsdale NY.

▶LOCAL RELEASE

Matchstick Architects: All That's In Between

BY JOEL WILLIAMS

The Matchstick Architects are a band based mostly in the Berkshires. (A couple of members are from New York and Connecticut respectively, but who's counting?) If you're into the local music scene, chances are you've heard these guys (and gals) play, and, if you've got ears, you've enjoyed them.

The Matchstick Architects recently released an album titled *All That's In Between*. The album features a classic rock Springsteen/Bon Jovi - esque sound. I've had this album in rotation for a few days now, and I'm still noticing little touches here and there, harmonics, different pedals, influences, etc. The Matchstick Architects are composed of Dar Maloney on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, Tom Conklin on lead guitar and backing vocals, Diane Davis on bass, and Dave Willey on drums.

The album begins with "Everyday." The song starts off with a mid-tempo country melody on the guitar, with the rhythm section coming in a measure or so later. Dar's also comes in after a couple of harmonic notes on the guitar, "I don't want to want you like I do, I do." I was immediately reminded of Bon Jovi and

Bruce Springsteen. To be honest, Dar's got a better voice than Springsteen (listen to them back to back, see for yourself). She sounds almost like an alto version of Susan Tedeschi of the Tedeschi Trucks Band. The song is fairly reserved, but it's solid and effective. The vocal breaks are well-placed and Tom's guitar playing adds nice accents and gravity to Dar's vocals.

Following "Everyday" is "Renegade Friend" which opens with some upbeat chords, with the rhythm section and lead guitar following. This song really showcases Diane's bass playing. So often the bass just sits off in the background, playing root notes and getting lost behind the guitar or in production. But here it's treated like a real instrument, as it should be, because bass is awesome, and Diane is pretty damned good at it. The song has an air of nostalgia to it, and just a hint of sadness in it. "It's hard, to remember, just when it began, but this is how it ends, my renegade friend."

The Matchstick Architects really know how to compose a song. Tom's guitar playing is always tasteful, which may seem a strange word to use to describe guitar playing. It's always complimentary to the music; it never feels like it's trying to steal the spotlight, which is relatively common in the era of music the Architects take influence from. He's not just playing a bunch of notes as fast as he can; he's playing a melody, sending a message, a feeling. To quote Miles Davis, "It's not the notes you play, it's the notes you don't play."

After Tom's guitar solo, the bridge comes in; just Dar and her guitar. "So stand



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Matchstick Architects album *All That's In Between* is available for purchase on CD Baby.

clear, or step off the divide, there's nothing to see here, unless you don't survive." Dave Willey comes in with a steady beat on the kick drum and Diane plays a nice walking bass line, ushering in the band's full sound as they enter into another chorus. One of my few complaints with this album is that this song isn't the closer.

My personal favorite on the album is "The Moment." It isn't the most dynamically interesting song on the album, that honor goes to "Sad But True," but it is the most catchy. The main riff is relatively repetitive but is bookended by lead riffs from Tom. There seems to be a bit of slide guitar on this track, a sound we rarely hear in music in 2016 (outside of country in any case). The harmonics here are very well placed, accenting breaks in vocals or

particular lines.

This song sounds the most radio friendly or the most apt for a single. The lyrics are very catchy and easy to sing along to, "It's not by choice, love's so elusive, so hard to come by, so hard to keep, I only know it fills the moment, whenever you speak my name, speak my name."

Personally, I would have given this track the 5 spot. Typically on albums, track 5 is the strongest song on the album. On *All That's In Between*, that spot is given to "Little Things." The song is reminiscent of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man" or John Mellencamp's "Jack and Diane," and opens with advice from the speaker's mother and a universal inspirational message. Well, Jack and Diane doesn't really have an inspiring message, more of a "we're all going to die" sort of message, but in a way that's somewhat reassuring. "Little Things" is a good song, there's no doubt there, though I think I'd like a little more strength in the verses for this to be a track 5. The song starts very strong, the instrumentation and vocals are strong, but in terms of lyrics, it's a little too repetitive for my tastes.

"What Do I Say" is, in my opinion, the best song on the album. In terms of songwriting, this is without a doubt the strongest song. The lyrics are deeply personal, exploring Dar's fears and desires. The song has a very 90s/2000s alternative sound to it.

Overall, this is a very solid album. For fans of Bruce Springsteen, Bon Jovi, or John Mellencamp, this is a band to see and an album to buy. The album is available on YouTube, take a listen and if you like it, you can buy the album on CDBaby.