

# [FOUNTAIN STREET]

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## NEXT

Joseph Fontinha, Robert Todd & Deb Todd Wheeler

February 27 – March 31, 2019

Artist Reception: Friday, March 1, 2019 from 6:00–8:00PM

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BOSTON, MA – Fountain Street gallery will be exhibiting “NEXT”, opening February 27, 2019, featuring selected works by Joseph Fontinha and siblings Robert Todd and Deb Todd Wheeler. Solo and collaborative projects of video, sound and installation will activate the gallery and immerse the viewer into habitats. These habitats are created realities at their depth and are about the authentic human experience, discovering the link between the personal and the shared, in ways that allow viewers to lose themselves in reality as it dissipates with the experience of possibilities.

The three artists make use of unexpected materials in their collaborative work; it’s not about the materials themselves so much as what world can be conjured with the simplest gesture, engaging the eye and the body. For Robert Todd and Deb Todd Wheeler the body is an extension of the camera. For Joseph Fontinha, the body is illusory—a stage, a canvas. In each of their practices and collaborations, there is a glee in seeing something possible and sublime in everyday things.

**Joseph Fontinha’s** work explores the improvisational nature of our approaches to representation; he likes to make things from nothing, creating illusions that bend our understanding of reality. Fontinha uses bits of tape and whatever is lying around to create tiny animations, which he then assembles into series and compilations.

*For as Long as They Kept Playing* is a compilation of loops and GIFS made over the past year that are all residual products of Fontinha’s recent performance work. He sees this as a collection of project summaries or haiku versions of larger projects. His objective is to reduce a day’s work to its most compact form, one with a temporal structure that coincides with the frenetic pace of daily life; it offers all of the thematic complexity of his work but without a prescribed viewing length. It lasts as long as you want to watch.

*Making a Square Hero* is a series of video projects that are combined into a six-panel video wall. Industrial color meets physical action in this contemplative piece that features the use of non-traditional art materials and even includes many videos that are from behind the scenes of his work, retracing the steps and the linear progression of a maker.

**Robert Todd**, a lyrical filmmaker, documented the presence or absence of nature in the urban lived environment, resulting in a collection of hundreds of films. Spanning multiple mediums, **Deb Todd Wheeler**'s work explores plasticity, affectivity and empathic engagement. In 2012, the two partnered to create *Artificial Atmospheres*, a time-based immersive installation made up of individual and collaborative works that thematically explore a multiplicity of accidental habitats and natural constructs. The theme of artificiality and the suspect positioning of the word "nature" is present in both artists' work.

In the wake of Robert Todd's death in 2018, his sister Deb Todd Wheeler has been gathering and organizing Robert's film archive for the Academy of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, and his personal papers and library for CalArts. Through this experience, Deb has chosen to exhibit video works from *Artificial Atmospheres*.

*ECLIPSE* and *SOL* are two of the video projections made by Robert Todd and Deb Todd Wheeler, as part the *Artificial Atmospheres* project. Both videos look to the heavens. Filmed on this spinning planet of ours, they remind us that no matter how dark things get, the sun will always rise again tomorrow. *ECLIPSE* features simply a metal garbage can that becomes planetary through the use of a single light source while *SOL* projects video clips of the sun onto a dusty piece of plexiglass suspended from the ceiling. The light from the sun reflects off the plexiglass and slowly makes its way around the room, a motion that puts the gallery in its own kind of orbit. *SUNRISE*, a third video in this series, was planned but unfinished at the time of Robert's death. It has been completed by Deb for this show and will be exhibited here for the first time.

In addition to the collaborative projects, there will also be a pop up OTRO LADO store in the gallery. [OTRO LADO](#) is Deb's son Eli's online store that uses fashion and design to raise money, spirits, and helps express difficult things. Proceeds benefit the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) and the [Children's Room](#).

A trained and educated oil painter, [Joseph Fontinha](#) has recently expanded his oil paintings to a combination of video, installation, and performance-based work that contains the residual effects of painting. Joseph sees himself as once a painter that made pictures of objects, but now as an artist working on projects that showcase an aerobic, studio-centric, idea-driven, spontaneous and visceral approach to the solving of visual problems. His work is at its core is about stillness, stamina, discomfort, trust, and wonder. It is about truly authentic human experience and what that looks like; it is about the link between personal and human stories.

Fontinha received his formal artistic education from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, MA, Boston University, MA, and Lesley University College of Art and Design, MA. He now teaches drawing and painting at Stoughton High School and gives public artist talks on education. Fontinha has participated in juried solo and group exhibits throughout Massachusetts. In 2017 he produced an immersive solo pop-up installation, *Making a Painting*, at Fountain Street Gallery. Joseph is a Core Member of Fountain Street Gallery in Boston's SOWA district.

[Robert Todd](#) (1963-2018) was a lyrical filmmaker, sound and visual artist. He produced an enormous body of work in 16mm film that resist categorization, revealing his particular way of seeing the world, through his unique lens, with an engagement of the eye and ear, light and shadow. Gifted in too many ways to list, Robert lived with sensitivity toward all creatures, a brilliant sense of humor, and a driving work ethic that awed everyone he worked with. Robert took his own life in August 2018. (More on Robert at <http://mikehoolboom.com/?p=124>.)

[Deb Todd Wheeler](#) is an award-winning visual artist from the Boston area. Her work generates discreetly intimate experiences through interactive installations, objects, and participatory gatherings. Raised by musicians, and trained as a

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material craftsman, she has an attitudinal nimbleness that spawns collaboration across disciplines. In her studio, performative objects and experiences are generated in relation to the human body- where time, material and interaction are required to explore ideas of labor and loss, artifice and authenticity, and the effects of industry on both the psyche and the landscape. There is a clash between the desire to be productive, to be industrious, to find beauty, to push technology forward, and the fraught consequences this desire reaps: through regret, lament, grief. Her projects act as a vehicle for processing both material and emotion.

## **Schedule of events:**

Artist Reception: Friday, March 1, 6:00-8:00pm

OTRO LADO Store: Ongoing, February 27 – March 31, 2019

Image Information: “NEXT” Joseph Fontinha and Deb Todd Wheeler

Fountain Street, a resource for artists, art-lovers and collectors, is a contemporary gallery in Boston, MA that exhibits the artwork of twenty-eight emerging and mid-career artists.

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