

**Mac Pierce**  
**Artist Statement**  
**Keys to the Castle**

These works draw on my experience delving into unexplored corners of the internet, areas of informatic diffusion where the delineation between the private and public become penetrable. Utilizing materials obtained through various leaks of classified information, each artwork articulates a different model by which secrets diffuse into the sphere of public knowledge. Through the action of leaking, the apparatuses of power containing these secrets are revealed, and through that revelation the formless secret is given shape. As translated into a physical form, these objects point back towards their origin, those being clandestine systems where secrets are power.

**Biography**

Mac Pierce (He/Him) (b. 1993, Seattle, WA) is a Chicago based artist and creative technologist that critically engages with weaponized emerging technologies. Raised in Idaho, he studied fine arts at the University of Idaho and self-taught various digital technologies to incorporate into his artistic practice. Refining his practice, he received his MFA in studio arts from the Art and Technology Studies department at the School of the Art institute of Chicago. He has participated in expositions including Expo Chicago and Ars Electronica and is in collections both domestic and international.

## Vein of an Angel

Sourced from a trove of documents stolen from the Indian Air Force, *Vein of an Angel* contains a made-to-specification copy of a hydraulic joint from an angel of death, the Russian Sukhoi S-U30 fighter jet.

The philatory itself is composed of the same materials used in the combat aircraft- composite plastics, aluminum, mil-spec hardware, etc. providing an analogous body for the joint to inhabit. The joint, an integral component in the operation of the aircraft, is but one part of the whole of something entirely unattainable. Through revelations (leaks) this aured entity becomes defined, allowing an initial understanding of the workings of this angel of death.

Of note - The fabrication specifications for this object were only accessible within the tens of thousands of documents divulged because it was under review by the quality control division of the Indian Air Force, having burst under the pressure of the hydraulic from

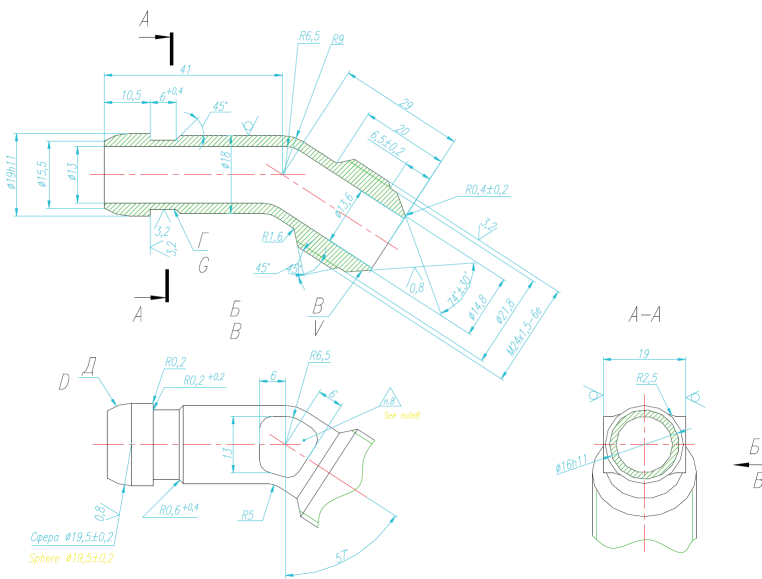


Fig. A – fabrication diagram of the hydraulic joint



Fig. B – The joint as installed in the SU-30 – This view is within the wing of the aircraft



Fig. C – An Indian Airforce SU-30 mid flight.



## Sciamachy (Shadow Boxing)

Though transparency is the rhetorical opposite of opacity, the two exist in parallel when understanding the ways secrets are hidden in plain sight. Mundane details, when properly understood and acted upon, can have enormous consequences. Within the apparatuses built to limit the spread of secrets, control of information can take many forms, such as physical security, redactions, or security through obscurity. But sometimes that information bypasses all control and is released unredacted. This can happen unintentionally or as a stratagem, taking the form of a true leak. In this scenario, information that holds power is released without any control on what is obscured, and when that happens, that power tends to contaminate its surroundings.

Take for instance the documents found stored at Mar-a-Lago in 2021-22, where thousands of government documents of various levels of classification were found placed haphazardly around the grounds of the club and stored in legal boxes, innocuous containers that masked the true power of their contents. Following the investigation, photos of these boxes were circulated, while any loose documents were shown fully redacted. Much speculation occurred on the contents of the boxes, but ultimately the specifics of the information contained remains unknown. The shadow of redactions cast a full blanket over what was in the boxes and as a result the boxes became signifiers of unknown power.

Contained within Sciamachy are the maximum number of pages that could fit within a standard legal box, numbering 3,600 pages divided into 100-page stapled packets. Each is fully printed and redacted, allowing the viewer to only guess at the weight of the information that could be potentially contained.



## C/S/TS

This print is derived from the leak of classified documents by 21 year old Massachusetts Air National Guard member Jack Tiexeira, who over the course of 2022 and 2023 leaked an estimated 64 documents onto the gaming chat service Discord. Tiexeira is believed to have done so to win disputes on the server, settling arguments with other adolescent users by leveraging his access to top secret information.

Accessed by the artist, these documents related to the specifics of equipment being sent to Ukraine, as well as the disposition of the United States fleet in regard to the defense of Taiwan, amongst other topics. Contained were 225 markings denoting the documents as classified, ranging from Confidential, Secret, to Top Secret. These were the glyphs that when seen, elevated the information within to that of near sacred importance. This aura of secrecy and the glyphs that bestow it manifested as a curse upon the documents, as when shared publicly Tiexeira found out that they had the ability to manifest FBI helicopters and SWAT teams.

Reproduced as they appeared in the leaked photos, C/S/TS displays all 225 classified markings.

# Mac Pierce Resume

## Education

BFA - Studio Art and Design, 2014, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID

MFA – Art and Technology Studies, 2023, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

## Selected Exhibitions

2024

Revelations from On High: Forming the unknown unknowns, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, IL

2023

Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria – Exhibiting the Camera-Shy Hoodie

EXPO Chicago, Displaying with Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL

SPACORE, Co-Prosperity Space, Chicago, IL - Group show, displaying A Scanner Darkly

Shall Not Be Infringed, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, IL

2022

Little But Bold, 3D3DCSI, Chicago, IL – Group show, displaying Sights Unseen

From This Point Forward, Weatherproof Annex, Chicago, IL – Group show, displaying A Scanner Darkly

EXPO Chicago – Displaying with Bert Green Fine Art

To Byte the Hand That..., Bert Green Fine Arts, Chicago, IL – Solo show

Pan/Tilt/Zoom, MacLean building / Online, Chicago, IL – Hybrid digital/physical installation that can be only viewed through a viewer controlled security camera – Exhibiting Cleaning up the Neighborhood

2021

On Being Seen, The INSTALLATION SPACE, North Adams, MA – Immersive installation centered around public and private privacy - Exhibiting A Scanner Darkly

2020

Speak Up!, Piano Craft Gallery, Boston, MA – Exhibiting The Opt-Out Cap & Just Outside Your Window.

2019

AVATARS // FUTURES, Nave Gallery, Somerville, MA – Exhibiting Thank You For Your Feedback.

2018

Peoples Sculpture Race, Cambridge River Arts Festival, Cambridge, MA – Winner of first place for speed with Including the Kitchen Sink!

Illuminus Festival, Boston, MA – Exhibiting Back to the Drawing Board

2015

Actualized, Solo exhibit, Untamed Art, Moscow, Idaho.

2014

Mapped, Solo exhibit, Prichard Art Gallery, Moscow, Idaho.

Layers, Sculpture exhibition, Ridenbaugh Gallery, Moscow, Idaho.

Art Affair, Marriott Fairfield Inn & Suites, Moscow, Idaho.

2013

Sprung, Visual Arts Community group show, Reflections Gallery, Moscow, Idaho.

Hot of the Press, printmaking centric group show, Third Street Gallery, Moscow, Idaho.

Unplugged, Visual Arts Community group show, Ridenbaugh Gallery, Moscow, Idaho..