

**Artist Statement
Camilla Taylor**

I explore the notion of the “cipher protagonist,” through narrative tableaux I arrange from nearly identical, abstract yet anthropomorphic sculptures. For any story to take hold in the imagination, the reader must engage with one character or another and invest in it emotionally. Interestingly, in many novels the protagonist is the least fleshed out, least characterized of all the participants. As a cipher, the protagonist becomes then an empty vessel that can be readily filled with the attributes of the reader. Popular identification is broadened by the great generosity of the fiction author, who provides an open character that can ever expand to hold more of the wants, desires, and quirks of readers.

For each of the sculptural “characters” in my tableau, I create an illusion of form and depth by utilizing fabric based prints and traditional two dimensional relief prints. Upon each figurative form, I map out an image through a complex series of steps. Typically this image is itself figurative in nature. A tension results from the melding of figure on figure as the object now exists in both two- and three-dimensions. What is “real” and what is illusionistic remains unresolved.

When I fill a room with nearly identical sculptures and arrange them in ways that mimic interaction, the viewer inserts him or herself into the role of one of the tableau’s participants in some way. I as author do not designate a protagonist--consequently that role is left up to the viewer. When presented with a crowd of anthropomorphic objects, the viewer often identifies one as the “favorite.” Around this figure he or she will write a new and personalized story that may have little bearing on the one that I intended but that still makes use of the visual tropes that I provide.