This field guide, *The Art World of Mark Jenkins*, was created over the past two months and includes this essay, 72 interactive PlaceStory Postcards, an interview with Mark Jenkins conducted on November 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2013, a collection of books and videos, and a tape sculpture of a field guide with two QR codes that link to this website and the PlaceStory website. I decided that I wanted to look at the work of Mark Jenkins for two reasons: first, I was interested in learning more about the process and philosophy behind the tape sculptures, and, second, I wanted to create an interactive map that allowed participants—online actors—an entry point to the art world Mark Jenkins creates. The interactive map demonstrates not only how many tape sculptures Jenkins has created, but also introduces the multitude of social experiments he has conducted globally. I interview Mark Jenkins to learn more about his philosophy, perspective, and process; ultimately, the interview was one of the most interesting and original aspects of this field guide. I took statements Jenkins made during the interview and included them as highlights on the PlaceStory Postcards so that the online actors could have insight into his concepts; I attempted to pair relevant images and locations with useful and interesting quotations. I also decided to find books that feature Mark Jenkins work and have included a reference page that highlights these texts; furthermore, I also looked at books that discuss the place and importance of politically charged street art. This exercise provided me with a substantial set of resources to
explore other street installation artists that work with sculptures, few work with hyper-realistic pieces, and Jenkins is the only documented and published street artists working, specifically, with hyper-realistic tape sculptures.

Mark Jenkins work has always fascinated me, not only because he has travelled the globe installing pieces on the street, in parks, and in galleries, but also because he asserts that his inspiration is rooted in his background as an ecologist and an environmentalist. Mark Jenkins did not intend to become an artist, but it is, currently, his primary profession and source of income. I spoke with him about how I lament that I have never seen his work in person, that there is a schism between my intellectual knowledge about his history and work, and my lack of personal experience with his work. I have followed his installations on-line for many years; I have used images of his sculptures as my Facebook photograph many times, though I have not seen his work up close. This facet of his installations speaks to their power and potency: I experience a personal attachment--I identify--with his hyper-realistic pieces.

Mark Jenkins was born in 1970 in Alexandria, Virginia. He is a street installation sculpture artist that works with hyper-realistic tape sculptures. He explores themes such as absurdity, environmental decay, and homelessness, and is influenced by artist such as George Segal and Juan Munoz. In the text, The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti, his motivation is described as an attempt to “generate a moment of pure theatricality in the street and to turn an everyday space into a place for art and drama” (Schacter, 2013, p. 44). He was working as an English teacher in Rio de Janeiro, when he decided, out of boredom, to create a tinfoil ball to play with; he was then inspired to cast the ball in tape, slice the cast off with a knife, and then close the ball. Impressed with what he had created he decided to cast his coffee pot utilizing the same technique, within a few months he had experimented with tape casting almost all the objects in his apartment, and decided to try casting himself.

His first street installation was in 2003 in Copacabana Beach: he constructed a giant sperm tape sculpture out into the waves to watch it surf back to shore. This experience propelled him to realize the value of create sculptures for the street and within a few weeks he had installed his first tape person in a dumpster adjacent to his apartment; he observed people on the street reacting to his piece and realized the potential for creating a moment of urban theater. This was also his first experience of watching his piece disposed of by garbage collection. By 2005,
Jenkins had moved back to Washington, DC and started constructing his “Storker Project:” a collection of tape babies installed in precarious and odd places around the city. Onlookers reacted emotionally to the larger-than-life plastic babies and this encouraged him to continue casting realistic creations out of tape. In 2006 he initiated his “Embed Series,” which included full-sized and clothed humanoid sculptures that he has become most well-known for. He observed discarded plastic waste littered throughout the city and this encouraged him to create realistic tape sculptures half human and half plastic trash. “The ‘Embed Series’ shifted the question for the viewer from ‘Is this art?’ to ‘Is this real?’ and set up a discourse with the street,” which helped Jenkins realize that the people on the street, the actors, were a necessary component to complete his social experiment: the actors reaction completed the exhibition (Schacter, 2013, p. 45). Jenkins has continued his work all over the globe, and has been featured in a handful of gallery spaces.

Mark Jenkins book, The Urban Theater, was published by Gestalten Publishing in 2012, in Berlin, Germany, and accompanied a gallery exhibition hosted at the Gestalten Gallery. Included in the book are large high-quality photographs of five of his past series: “The Innocent,” “The Outcasts,” “The Orphans,” “The Heartless,” and “The Maladjusted” (Klanten & Hubner, 2012, p. 3). “The Innocent” include much of his early work: tape sculpture animals installed in urban environments that mimic natural settings, also included are the “Blond Sleeping Girl” and a few tape children. “The Blond Girl” also made her first appearance with “The Innocent,” though, as Mark Jenkins explained in an interview I recently conducted, “they can reincarnate,” on occasion he will recreate the same tape sculpture multiple times (Interview, 11/22/2013).
Some notable members of “The Outcasts” include the “Hoodie Guy,” the “Lost Child,” and the “Balloon Floater,” generally, “The Outcasts” are more overtly melancholy and dramatic. “The Orphans” include the “Storker Project” appropriately named since this series is predominantly comprised of over-sized sculptures of tape babies in lonesome and lost environments.

“The Heartless” are all male figures with full-coverage ski masks, they are posed in violent or threatening positions, and were installed both inside and out; they evoke depressive, angry, and aggressive energies. A notable sculpture included in “The Heartless” is the stabbed graffiti writer lying face-down on the street in Malmo. “The Maladjusted” include tape sculptures installed both within galleries and on the street, the significant aesthetic of the “The Maladjusted” is that, in some manner, their faces are obscured, contorted, detached, or nonexistent. Notable sculptures in “The Maladjusted” include “The Golden Ass,” “The Newspaper Man,” and “The Cone Head” (Klanten, et all. 2012).
When considering Mark Jenkins work in relation to Becker’s concepts of “art world,” a potent dialogue evolves: Jenkins creates his works to be released to the streets, he does not title his pieces, nor does he sign his work, he remains anonymous; the people on the street are called “actors” and only when they experience his piece, only when they interact with it, even if only momentarily, is the circuit created, is the piece complete, is the social experiment underway. In the interview I conducted with Jenkins he spoke of the “bubble” he creates when he installs a piece, this “bubble” is, in a manner, the art world he is initiating, but only when the “bubble” includes an “actor” is it fully activated. Jenkins work is also, by nature, a form of remixing, he is taking plastic waste—often in the form of trash bags and recycled bottles—and reimagining them to be “art,” to be an inherent aspect of his installation.

His work is also intrinsically political, though he often approaches the weighted topic of environmental degradation with an aspect of absurdity and humor. This approach, harnessing humor, softens the hyper-realism, this allows the “actors” to experience familiarity, which, in light of his social experiment, is incredibly valuable: he wants the “actors” to feel a personal attachment to his work, not for his own recognition—in fact, that would ruin it—but because his work is meant to make people pause, think, react, and respond. Furthermore, because his work is a direct response to the urbanization and pollution of natural spaces, he is, ultimately, foreshadowing the future of human experience. In my interview with Jenkins he spoke of an experience where he wanted to be a “natural human,” he was camping with his dog and wanted to be “like an animal,” so he removed all of his clothes, and his shoes, to “see how far he could get,” in short, he did not make it very far and remarked that humans are just not built to exist in the natural world anymore, we have become products of our environments and that environment is lined with concrete and littered with plastic (Interview, November 22nd, 2013). While I agree with his assertion that humans have inexcusably destroyed the natural world beyond recognition, I would posit that our dependency on urban comfort and familiarity will not last, at some time in the near future we will reach a critical apex and all the comfort and concrete will fail us, and waiting patiently to reclaim its space, the natural world will infiltrate our cities, our car parks, our sky scrapers, and take back what—ultimately—belongs to it.
Works Cited


M. Jenkins. (Personal communication, November 22nd, 2013).


