

JOHN HUMPHRIES

RULES, RECIPES AND MYTHOLOGY—

Works on Paper

I make watercolor drawings referencing the mythological/religious immigrant diasporas in the United States. After researching particular stories, codes or recipes are developed which serve as guides to follow when drawing. Sometimes the coding and recipe-making is a joyous process, sometimes not, but whatever this process is, it is ritualistically and rigorously followed. The intent is to generate a facsimile of sacred power and a reality formed from that intent. Much is left, however, to interpretation and momentary inspiration.

In some small way the artwork is the recipe, more so than the final watercolor drawing. These recipes and codes borrow from the medieval concept of *ecphrasis* once used to transmit ideas about art between crafts people before movable type and image. This method of transmission emphasizes a mechanical geometry over the visual appearance of the finished object, allowing the intentions of the craftsman to be showcased in the final product. A similar series of drawings could be made by others for the exhibition, using the same recipe for each piece and showing the hand of the artisan.

This unique connection between utility and aesthetic reflects a personal engagement with a religious or mythological tale where certain rituals are followed, dutifully. Each person is part of a group and simultaneously unique, accessing both a spiritual and a functional aspect to ritual and creation. The sacred gets transmuted to both an ungraspable presence and a geometric, material one. Thus the work in the exhibition combines architectonic elements, mythology, and watercolor to capture the sacred and the reality on the same page.

John Humphries