



Sculptor Michael Combs Releases New Book

July 23, 2016

by Pat Rogers

Sculptor [Michael Combs](#) launches the publication of his new book with a book signing at the [Parrish Art Museum](#) to coincide with the final day of "[Radical Seafaring](#)," where his work is on exhibit.

Michael Combs (The Grenfell Press, 2016) reveals the sculptor's work and its exploration of the loss of environmental innocence, inspired by generations of Long Island Baymen. The book signing takes place at the Parrish on Sunday at 11 a.m. on July 24, 2016. A book signing launch in New York City is in the works.

The fully illustrated 80 page catalogue includes a foreword by Klaus Kertess, an interview of the artist by Parrish Art Museum Director Terrie Sultan, and essays by Max Blagg, Alicia G. Longwell on Combs's sculpture, *Apparel* ("*Clothes Make the Man*"), and Amei Wallach on Combs's 2005 installation, *The Trophy Room*.



Michael Combs book cover, featuring detail of "Daisy Chain" (2016). Photo: Paul Kopelow

"Michael's work is a highly fascinating synthesis of contemporary art and maritime tradition— his work is conceptual and his craftsmanship is extremely sophisticated," stated [Andrea Grover](#), the Parrish Art Museum's Century Arts Foundation Curator of Special Projects.

Growing up on Long Island Michael learned about hunting and waterfowl carving from his grandfather, Captain George Washington Combs, and his father, Captain Jack Combs. Rather than carry on the family tradition of living off the land, Combs chose to pursue study in art. In 1990 he moved to New York where he earned his BFA and MFA from the School of Visual Arts. Living and working in Manhattan during the 1990s provided a first-hand education in contemporary art which helped solidify Combs's individual style. Combining elements from the past with a view of the future, Combs creates contemporary sculptures seeped in historic personal heritage.

As Klaus Kertess writes in the foreword, "Michael Combs creates lures, traps, tricks that ensnare our eyes and ambivalently mock the masculine sexuality attached to the hunting and decoy carving that has occupied his family for generations."

Combs's grandfather, father, and uncle were working fishermen in the Great South and Peconic bays. Year round, they fished, hunted birds, and acted as hunting guides. In his interview with Terrie Sultan, Combs said, "They really did work off the land, in something like a Native American style. They moved around to where the fish were, working 360 days a year on the water."

Combs's work has been included in Parrish Art Museum exhibitions since 2004. His sculpture, *Daisy Chain* (2016) is currently on view in the exhibition *Radical Seafaring*, curated by Andrea Grover, Century Arts Foundation Curator of Special Projects.

In 2014, Michael Comb received an artist spotlight in the Parrish Road Show with his installation *OutHouse* (2014). [Click here to read commentary on the installation.](#) In addition, Comb's sculpture *Spent Cases* (1998) was on view in the Museum's 2014-2015 permanent collection installation. Combs has had solo exhibitions at Salomon Contemporary of New York City and East Hampton; Art Dubai, Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans. 21C Museum Louisville and Cincinnati. He has participated in group exhibitions at The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, University of North Carolina, University of Florida, The Watermill Center, and Apex Art.

BASIC FACTS: The Book Signing with Michael Combs takes place on Sunday, July 24, 2016 at 11 am. Admission is free, pre-registration of the book is recommended. The Parrish Art Museum is located at 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976. www.parrishart.org.

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