



Artist Statement:

Todd Underwood

As an artist, I thrive in messes. Within my creative process, I often end up with my hands and floors covered in paint. My studio is home to a hoard of found-objects which await to be showered with paint. From creating colorful constructions to ruining sentimental objects, my work continues to evolve further into formally experimenting with gravity. Throughout my design, painting, photography, or otherwise, I react to the rules and regulations of physicality: being bound to the earth. Everything falls eventually.

Aesthetically, I gravitate towards forms that drip and sink, which pushes me further from traditional methods of painting or drawing. The relationship between my concepts and my materials is strategic, but the outcome is susceptible to change. A creative lack of control moves my work in a way that I can only direct.

Stylistically, my designs diverge from my paintings in that they are observably cleaner. I maintain a minimalist approach to my design work which I believe allows my creative choices to breathe. I have an appetite for engaging both of the styles I've developed from my respective concentrations to create something aesthetically harmonious.

Title**Original Format**

Figure 1: HOT MESS	Paint in Custom Wardrobe, 4 ft x 7 ft x 2 ft
Figure 2: Ruined	Video
Figure 3: Peels	Paint, 7 ft x 12 ft x 3 ft
Figure 4: Resistance is Futile	Paint on PVC Board, 12 in x 18 in x 10 in
Figure 5: Heaven Above, Earth Below	Paint on PVC Board, 18 in x 36 in
Figure 6: Buzzed Hive & Winery Logo	Graphic Design
Figure 7: Buzzed Posters	Graphic Design
Figure 8: Pale Fire Book Cover	Graphic Design
Figure 9: The Wild Bunch Magazine Spread	Graphic Design
Figure 10: Lion of the Tribe of Judah	Acrylic, 18 in x 24 in



Figure 1: HOT MESS



Figure 2: Ruined



Figure 3: Peels



Figure 4: Resistance is Futile



Figure 5: Heaven Above, Earth Below



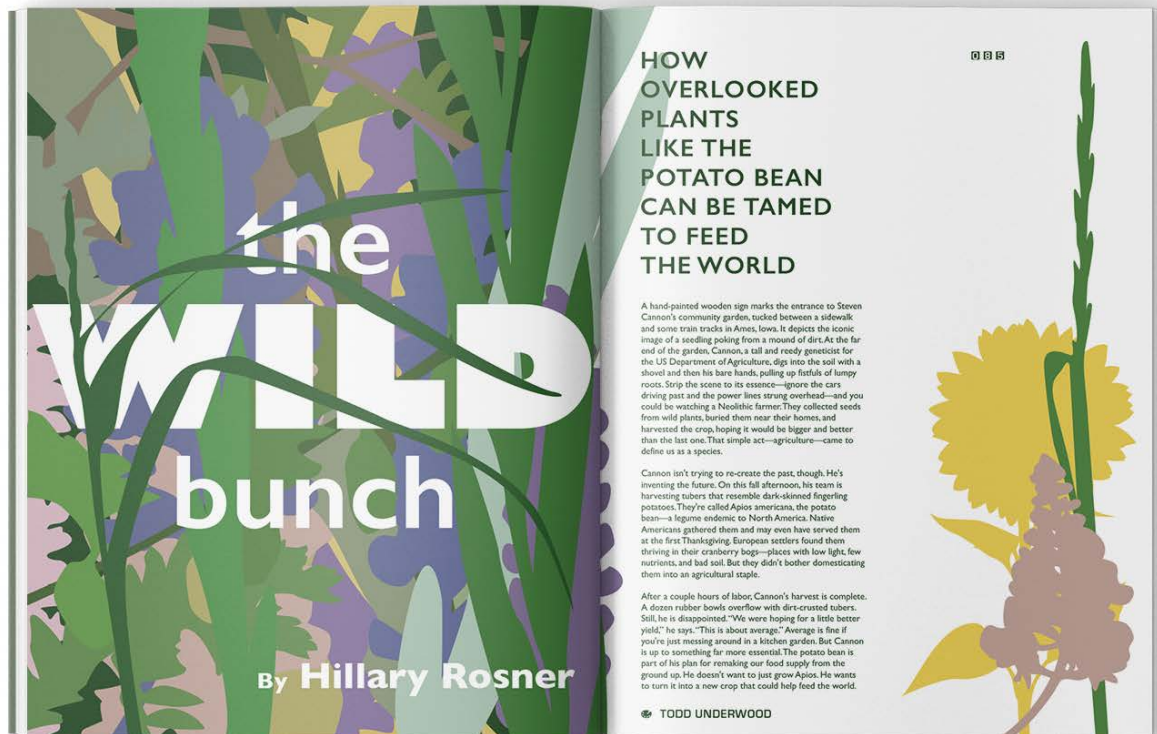
Figure 6: Buzzed Hive & Winery Logo



Figure 7: Buzzed Posters



Figure 8: Pale Fire Book Cover



HOW OVERLOOKED PLANTS LIKE THE POTATO BEAN CAN BE TAMED TO FEED THE WORLD

A hand-painted wooden sign marks the entrance to Steven Cannon's community garden, tucked between a sidewalk and some train tracks in Ames, Iowa. It depicts the iconic image of a seedling poking from a mound of dirt. At the far end of the garden, Cannon, a tall and ready geneticist for the US Department of Agriculture, digs into the soil with a shovel and then his bare hands, pulling up fistfuls of lumpy roots. Strip the scene to its essence—ignore the cars driving past and the power lines strung overhead—and you could be watching a Neolithic farmer. They collected seeds from wild plants, buried them near their homes, and harvested the crop, hoping it would be bigger and better than the last one. That simple act—agriculture—came to define us as a species.

Cannon isn't trying to re-create the past, though. He's inventing the future. On this fall afternoon, his team is harvesting tubers that resemble dark-skinned fingerling potatoes. They're called *Apios americana*, the potato bean—a legume endemic to North America. Native Americans gathered them and may even have served them at the first Thanksgiving. European settlers found them thriving in their cranberry bogs—places with low light, few nutrients, and bad soil. But they didn't bother domesticating them into an agricultural staple.

After a couple hours of labor, Cannon's harvest is complete. A dozen rubber bowls overflow with dirt-crusting tubers. Still, he is disappointed. "We were hoping for a little better yield," he says. "This is about average." Average is fine if you're just messing around in a kitchen garden. But Cannon is up to something far more essential. The potato bean is part of his plan for remaking our food supply from the ground up. He doesn't want to just grow *Apios*. He wants to turn it into a new crop that could help feed the world.

● TODD UNDERWOOD

Figure 9: The Wild Bunch Magazine Spread



Figure 10: Lion of the Tribe of Judah