



ARTWORK BY:

Issue 76

J.J. Cromer

The cover image for this issue of Arkrush is a detail [Leakers](#), a mixed-media work on paper by self-taught artist [J.J. Cromer](#). This winter, Cromer returns to the [Outsider Art Fair](#) to show with Virginia-based [Grey Carter Objects of Art](#).

Born in Princeton, West Virginia, in 1967, Cromer grew up with creative tendencies, but chose an academic path. After earning his BA in history from the University of Wyoming, he pursued master's degrees in English from Western Kentucky University and library and information science from the University of Southern Mississippi. Upon beginning a career as a reference librarian and settling in southwest Virginia, however, Cromer's artistic instincts resurfaced. Evening drawing sessions evolved from pastime to preoccupation, and in 1999, Cromer began showing his work at local galleries. He has since participated [group shows](#) across the country, and in 2004 the [Lindenau-Museum](#) in Altenburg, Germany, included his work in an exhibition of Southern artists. He recently resigned from his post as a librarian to focus on his art.

Cromer's early work relies heavily on patterns, primary colors, and the repetition of stylized faces, but his later pieces are more thematically complex. His fantastical subjects include everything from [dogs](#) and [zebras](#) to [mystics](#) and [bodies inside bodies](#). Though he works predominately with oil pastels and inks, Cromer occasionally incorporates sections of previous paintings and found objects, such as stamps or pieces of books. His compositions can recall the folkloric images of [Chagall](#) or the elongated bodies of [Giacometti](#), but Cromer's charm lies in his antihistorical approach as an outsider artist. (LM)

Leakers, 2007

Mixed media
22 1/2 x 30 in./ 57.2 x 76.2 cm
Courtesy Grey Carter Objects of Art, McLean, VA
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