



## *Directions*

### ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

#### The Wardrobe Project

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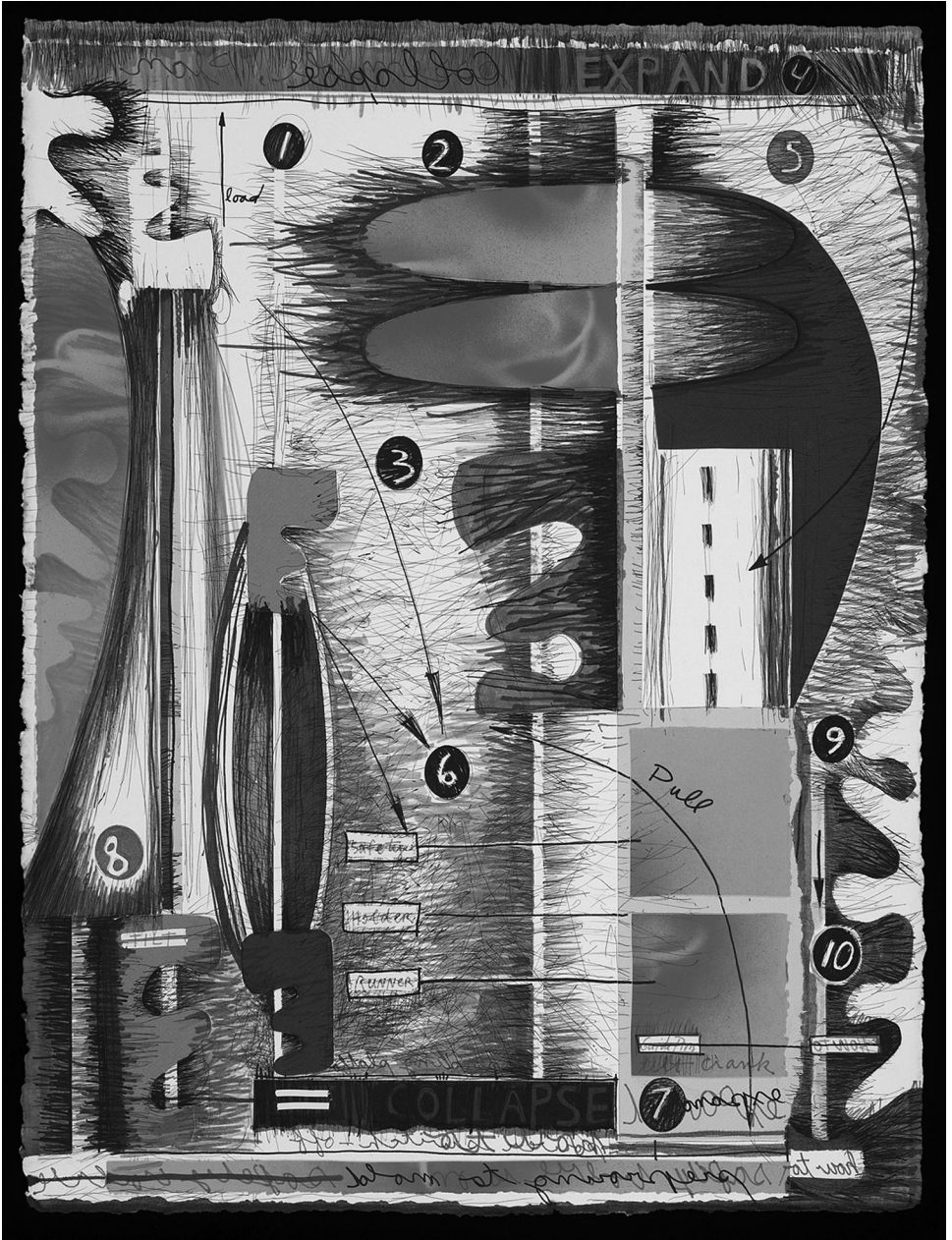
*Sally Schluter Tardella*

This project began two years ago with a calamitous house fire in my parents' home in New Jersey. As I walked through the place where I had grown up, and entered our cold and dark living room, I was drawn to a blackened antique wardrobe that had been passed down from my great-grandparents. When I pulled open the first drawer of the wardrobe, the face panel came away in my hands, revealing an x-ray like view into the water-soaked yet somehow preserved ash contents of the drawer. Each drawer held mementos and everyday objects, things that I had forgotten, carefully saved and cataloged by my parents, and now dissolving if touched.

Each of these drawings is an internal composition representing specific drawers of memory. All of the drawings are made with ink and whiteout, with the whiteout blocking words, marks, and recollections. I use stencils as indices, controlling marks, referencing the dissolving structure of the wardrobe and the melted relics of my memory. I also use collaged components. For example, *Dead Letters* is constructed of old letters from my grandmother, her carefully type-written words and sentences blocked with whiteout; the message, and indeed the medium, faded and obsolete. In *Patterns*, pieces of actual

sewing patterns are layered with ink and whiteout, memorializing a drawer for old patterns and the sewing lessons my grandmother insisted I have as a child because “all girls should know how to sew.” *Hot Wax* represents a drawer for dinner candles and the sensory experience of dipping my hands into vats of hot wax as a child visiting my father’s candle factory so I could make translucent and transitory molds of my hands. The drawing entitled *Directions* is a response to a collection of instruction pamphlets—how to use appliances and assemble toys—bound together and saved in case this information might be needed again. *Routes* is a drawer of maps, constructed from remembered maps of old car trips, and topographical maps from hiking excursions. I no longer know the destinations or road numbers, so here they are covered with whiteout.

These drawings re-purpose the distorted remains of found memory, making each a new construction that is both a tribute to a personal memory and a fabrication of what I imagine was once there. Together they form a chronicle of the shadows of the artifacts of my past.



Directions