

# Marni Shindelman

## SOUVENIRS FROM HUMAN, MY MAMMAL

In 2000, over 7,000 people attended the memorial for Willie B., the famed lowland gorilla of the Atlanta Zoo who, decades before, had been the poster animal for the zoo's major rehabilitation and renovation. After public debate, 80 percent of his remains were placed in a bronze memorial at the zoo while 20 percent were flown courtesy of Delta Airlines and Air France to his native country in West Africa. Willie B. lived his last decade in a brand new habitat, fathered five children and after over 30 years in a solitary cage, was able to socialize himself into a large family of silverback gorillas.

I spent my youth pressing my nose against Willie B.'s enclosure in Atlanta, as he watched the black and white television placed in his cage for his companionship, paced and masturbated on his tire swing to the daily soaps. As an adult, I cried at the news of his death.

SOUVENIRS FROM HUMAN, MY MAMMAL, 2006 is a series of twenty color photographs (24" x 20" C-Prints, 40" x 32" framed), depicting various animals in hand sewn, tulle, geometric habitats. It investigates infamous zoo animals and the cities and citizens who adore them. Each photograph is based on and named for the famous animal depicted.