

Folk Arts for the Home

When conversation dried up, we turned instead to ice sculpture, hacking blocks of freeze into rudimentary shapes. We began with what we could see – household fittings, mostly, and the contents of drawers and cupboards – but as our numb hands grew more adept with picks and chisels, we sought out subjects in transformation ballads. You carved a duck, while I carved a dog. You carved a rose, while I carved a bee. You carved a nun, while I carved a priest. We got good. We got very good indeed, and your *pièce de resistance* was Tam Lin caught in a craze of metamorphosis: newt, snake, lion, and naked night, all at once on a gleaming steed. It deserved the accolades, the press coverage, the crowds jostling for selfies in our sub-zero sitting room. But by that time, I'd moved on from the popular literal, and was shaping abstracts in the back bedroom. This one's a whistle tune in the key of F. This one's the words I could never find.

Oz Hardwick

OPPOSITE: Michael Magers "Untitled - From the Series, Independent Mysteries"