

IN THE PRESENCE OF AN ABSENCE is the latest multimedia installation from local writer and artist Andrew Johnson. This work will be on display May 2 - 23, 2025 in the small gallery at Vulpes Bastille (1737 Locust, Kansas City MO 64108) with an opening reception from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 2025. Additional gallery hours are 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. Private viewings are also available by appointment (text/call 816-718-9916).

[Check out this short video about the installation.](#)

ARTIST STATEMENT ON THE EXHIBITION:

Anyone who has looked into their family history knows that when we try to understand our ancestors, we are often trying to also understand something about ourselves. But what can be learned about one's self when the history has become so fragmented and fraught that very little can be known? What does one do with the unknown? This multimedia installation revolves around my great-grandfather Florencio Garcia, whose life in New Mexico a century ago has always been a mystery to me. In this intimate room every image, word, or object conceals as much as it reveals. The space hints at American history, politics, assimilation propaganda, and autobiography, but always pulls back. There's a story right in front of you but it's scrambled. It's revealed and then concealed. It comes forward and then retreats. I've become convinced that when you've been severed from your first language, from the language of your childhood, the language you dream in, the generations that follow lose access to so much that otherwise might get passed down. Stories are lost, family histories are lost, memory is lost, a sense of origin is lost. Yet we remain in the presence of an absence.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Andrew is an author, essayist, and multimedia artist based in Kansas City, Missouri. He is the author of two books: *The Thread* and *On Earth As It Is*, and his essays and poems have been published in *The Sun*, *Image*, *Commweal*, *Crazyhorse*, and elsewhere. His multimedia installations and other work have been exhibited at Vulpes Bastille, Thornhill Gallery, Kansas City Artists Coalition, and Lodger Gallery. Andrew has attended residencies at Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT) and Charlotte Street (Kansas City, MO), and he has received grants from Arts KC, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Andy Warhol Foundation, and Charlotte Street. He completed his B.A. in Communication at William Jewell College (Liberty, MO) and a master's of fine arts in creative writing at the University of Missouri - Kansas City.