

MANIFEST v47



MASTER PIECES 2010

MANIFEST

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY
AND DRAWING CENTER

volume 47

MASTER PIECES 2010

Works by New Masters

MANIFEST is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

MANIFEST VOLUME FORTY-SEVEN

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Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center

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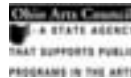
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MASTER PIECES 4

August 13 - September 10, 2010

Curated by Jason Franz

Amy Boone-McCreesh

Cassie Clements

Nathan Hatch

Josh Johnson

Mari LaCure

Janet Macpherson

Amanda Marcott

William McMahan

Amanda Pfister

Kasey Ramirez

Amy Royer

Dominic Sansone

Louis Tortora

Why do you want to get a degree that will perpetuate your poverty?

- David Shirey, founder of the School of Visual Art's (New York) M.F.A. program

It has been said that there is a glut of artists with MFA degrees in the world - that they are a dime a dozen. Unless academia is conferring this terminal fine art degree on anyone willing to pay the often staggering price for it, this devaluation of the degreed Master is indicative, we feel, of a systemic problem (and misunderstanding) in society. The role of the master artist as cultural observer, intellectual mystic, and social healer is too often trivialized and misunderstood. After all, there must be some motivation behind the risk implied by the question David Shirey asks of new graduate students. Of course one quick answer is that the degree is not as much about the mastery of art as it is a license to teach at the college level. However, this motivational duality in academia can leave students in limbo, accomplishing neither goal fully. But through their prescribed experimentation, study of theory, inspiration, and hard work, some, if not most, graduate students ultimately produce excellent works of art.

However, some suggest that an academic degree has no power to establish one's mastery of an art form - that only hard work and trial by fire in the 'real world' can do that. But these critics are, one might guess, those who either did not try, or could not survive the grueling critiques and endless all-nighters in the framework of the academic graduate process. Certainly, to say one is a Master is not to devalue other means of attaining excellence or status. But to have studied in the context of a university or college program, with rigorous requirements, and gained the degree of Master surely warrants some serious merit.

But why such a disconnect between the public at large and the pursuit of mastery in academia? Is this an inevitable situation? Is the alienation deliberate, the result of cultural polar shifts, or the machinations of tenured administrators with vested interests in remaining aloof? Surely one cannot simply say that MFA programs, and contemporary artists, are valid simply because society can and will bear them. Sure, in 1000 years this will be a significant footnote, but right now there must be more... and hopefully the bottom line is not the same bottom line drawn by commercial opportunism on the part of academic institutions - that is, hopefully MFA degrees are not just a commodity. One goal of Manifest's project is to emphasize that, regardless of the institutional context, the artists exhibited, their degrees, and their work are highly valued and considered worth our time, effort, and expense to present, and worth the public's time to experience and understand. We are taking a stand for the validity and quality of these works, and for the importance of mastery in art today.

An annual offering, the Master Pieces project continues to reveal the intensity and professionalism of students working towards their terminal degree in the field of art or design. This is a chance for the community to engage with and better understand master artists at the start of their careers, to reach across a sometimes impossibly wide chasm between society at large and high-end academic pursuit in the visual arts. Manifest sets out to provide a neutral-ground sampling of important and very current creative research.

Often the most exceptional work comes out of these artists' immersion in their culture of study and intellectual pursuit. Manifest's goal, therefore, is to select works that in the truest sense of the word are contemporary masterpieces - works that set the standard of quality that the artist is expected to maintain throughout his or her professional career. This exhibit catalog will serve as a visual documentation of these artists' ideas and self-made benchmarks for years to come.

This 4th annual Master Pieces was open to submissions by current graduate students, or those who received their MFA/MA degree after July 2009. Six of the artists are current graduate students. The remaining seven received their Master's degree earlier this year. For this exhibit 113 artists representing 65 colleges or universities in 28 states and three countries submitted 303 works for consideration. Twenty-seven works by these 13 artists were selected for presentation in the gallery and catalog. We are proud to offer this 4th Annual Master Pieces which sets out to present the best works by the best new Masters in 2010.

Amy Boone-McCreesh

Current Graduate Student, Towson University

I am interested in exploring the cultural lines between functional items and decoration. At times, these two ideas coincide resulting in an important functional object or idea that has been embellished and decorated either to reinforce its importance or for pure aesthetics. It is my goal to create 2-D and 3-D objects that reference decoration, ritual, and the artificial nature and purpose of art itself. Found objects, second-hand fabrics, celebratory ephemera, and the amassing of materials and mark-making are my primary vehicles for expression. The result of this body of work is a collection of pieces that, together, create new relationships and a dialogue amongst themselves. The grouping of these pieces also presents a platform to examine the work as a new collection and manifestation of decoration today and how it functions within the broader cultural context of world history.

Untitled (yellow)

fabric, found objects, stuffing, glue, thread
& paint, 26" x 10" x 8", 2010





Rusty (left)

fabric, cut paper, found objects, thread, glue, foam & stuffing, 22" x 10" x 9", 2010



Cassie Clements

2010 MFA Graduate, West Virginia University



Working from observation is what has always driven me to paint. This process involves the artist's perception of sight and the translation of what is seen through marks on the surface. Combined with these marks and objects are ideas that are changing around me, which create my work.

Currently my work has been dealing with the ways people perceive nature and bring them into the indoors. My work is rooted in the tradition of painting still life, interior spaces and landscape. I chose to represent these ideas in still life in order to have a variety of objects to represent the many views of landscape past and present. I reference the snapshot, the way the landscape has been viewed in art history through painting, as well as the plants and products that enter our home. My choice of objects are representative of both the tradition of still life and the essence of landscape.

Painting my objects in strong lighting creates a dramatic setting for their stage. Much like an installation, I arrange my objects in an environment on the floor of the studio, sometimes incorporating walls and windows placing my objects in a very dull grey setting. This grey atmosphere sets off the vivid colors of the photographs and gives me a setting to arrange my objects in.

This process of painting is deeply rooted in history; I often draw upon art history as a reference. While painting, I gradually begin to see what is actually in front of me, and translate that to an abstract mark on the surface, creating space, light, and color. Ultimately it is my goal for the viewer to understand these objects better because they are painted and that they may view them through the painter's lens.

opposite: ***Self Portrait with Space: Star Charts and Art Books***
oil on linen, 60" x 42", 2010

Still Life with Mushroom Cloud: Turner and Courbet
oil on linen, 42" x 60", 2010



Nathan Hatch

Current Graduate Student, University of Kentucky

I am interested in the ability to let people into our lives and how this causes us to view ourselves and others. I believe that we all, to some degree, have walls around us. What changes from person to person is how well fortified they are and our ability to change. My relationship with these factors show in each piece I create.

Vessel forms are used as a conceptual and formal starting point in my work. A basket may have a heavy lid with a hinge but no handle. I use this as a visual metaphor to describe people's potential for opening up but also their inability to do so. Self-reflection is paramount in my creative process.





An Island Onto Myself
oak & steel, 40" x 40" x 10", 2009





Josh Johnson

2010 MFA Graduate, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

My current body of work derives from notions of an inward nature. Things that are difficult to put your finger on for very long are my focus. Sensations as obscure as the lump in the pit of your stomach or the itch in the back of your mind that turns sleep into a game, conditions that both stifle and propel an individual.

Coating themselves with the residue of memories, concerns, desires and other intangible features of the body, these unnamed sensations reveal themselves through the process and repetition of working, influencing my formal considerations and impacting the psychological tone of my sculptures. In most instances, I reference forms of the natural world and ordinary objects, but then blur their identities causing them to flicker between something recognizable and something alien. This approach enables me to work with the essential qualities of that which is faceless and abstract residing within myself.

Coupled with this direction is the motivation to employ conventional materials in an unconventional fashion. Materials that in their usual context are hidden from sight or intended to be ignored, are made visible and prominent. In this case, I am working exclusively with pink polystyrene, expanding foam, and white glue.

Together these materials, which are typically relegated to the darkness of interior spaces, are utilized for their inherent aesthetic and structural qualities while establishing a metaphor. Just as these materials are most often found within something, so too is the situation of the content. The resulting objects become manifestations of a twofold honesty, being true to materials and to myself.

Leaving

polystyrene, expanding foam, white glue & steel,
7" x 13" x 5", 2010



Understudy

polystyrene, expanding foam, white glue & steel, 48" x 71" x 23", 2010



Mari LaCure

2010 MFA Graduate, University of Kansas

I draw patterns taken from images of nature that range from the microscopic to the macroscopic. My microscopic forms are inspired by atoms and molecules, cellular structures, and veins; the macroscopic imagery extends to weather patterns, tree branches, constellations, and galaxies. I am interested in the relationships between things we can see with our eyes and images we can only see aided by technology. In my drawings I layer and juxtapose images of both large scale and the minute to set up harmonious relationships between different structures.

As the title of my current body of work, Waves refers to my aim to imbue the surface of my drawings with a subtle vibration of energy. I work on thin paper that records and responds to my drawn marks by bending, stretching, and crinkling. The imagery is built up through layers of different media, including woodblock printed motifs, watercolor, pen, colored pencil, and sewn lines. The interaction of many different delicate materials in my work encourages the viewer to experience a heightened sensitivity and awareness to the visible and seemingly invisible in the world.

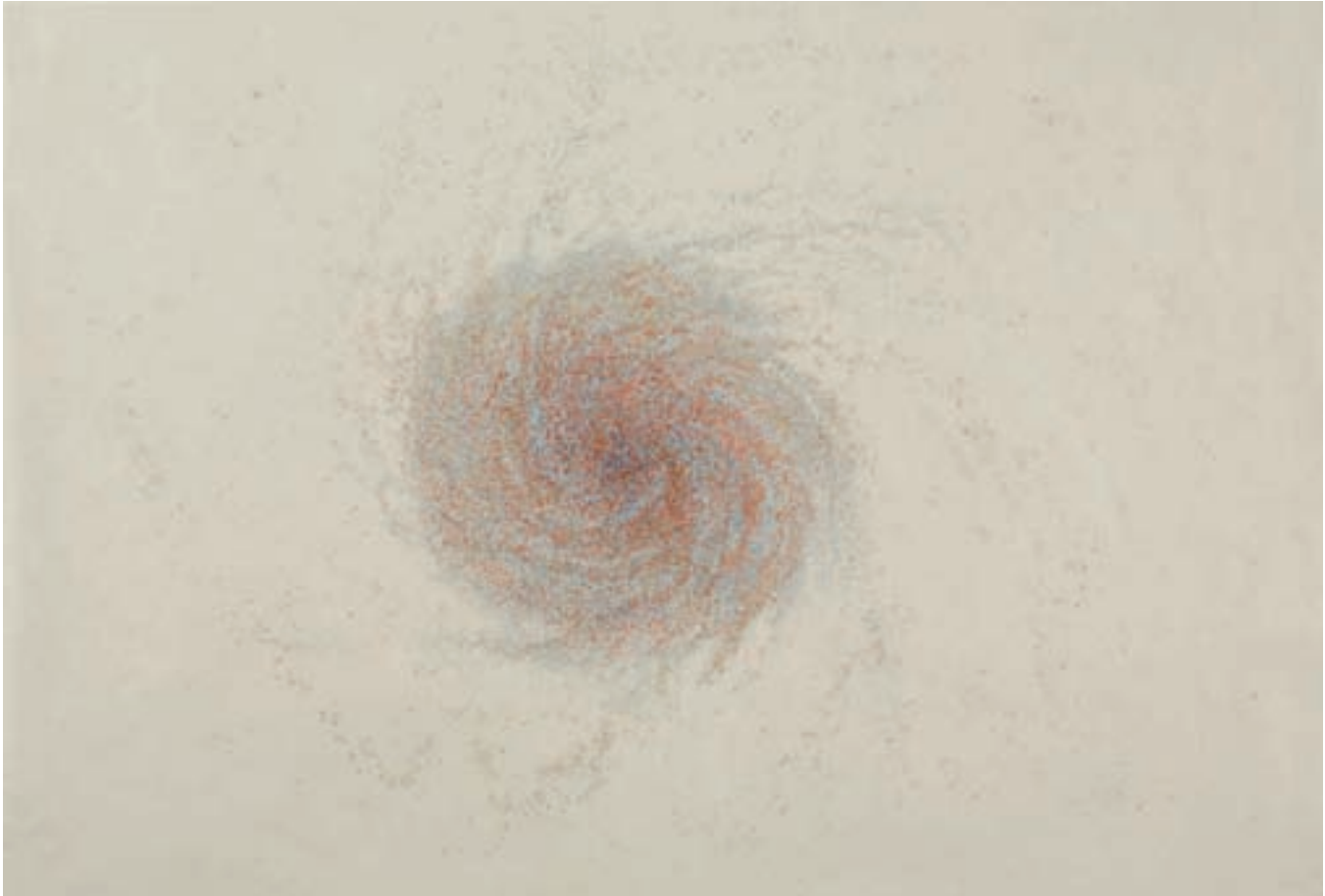
Collision

colored pencil, pen, watercolor & thread on paper, 25" x 37", 2010



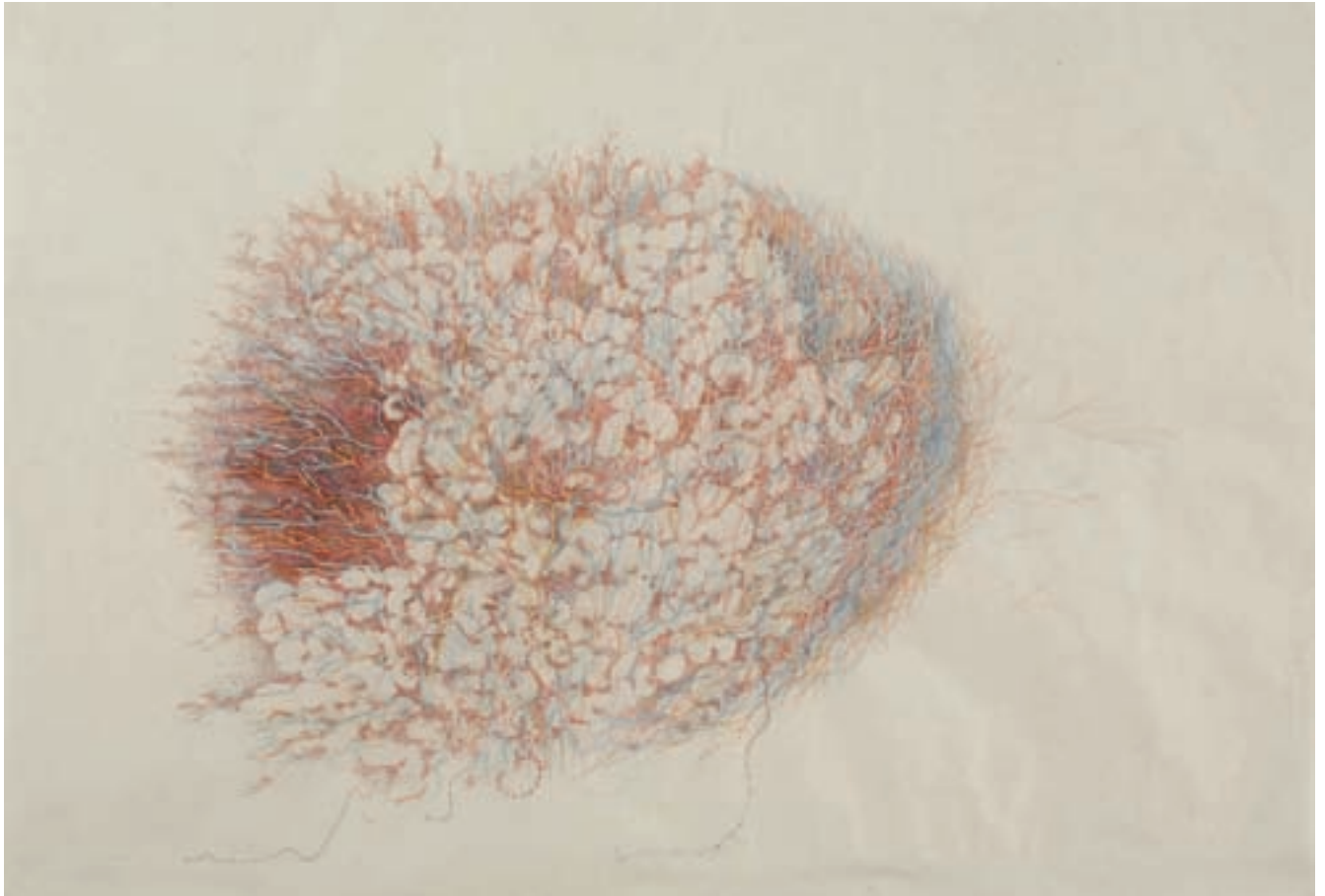
Spiral

colored pencil, pen, watercolor & thread on paper, 25" x 37", 2009



Waves

colored pencil, pen, watercolor & thread on paper, 25" x 37", 2009



Janet Macpherson

Current Graduate Student, The Ohio State University

My work reflects my interest in fragmentation, and the way in which familiar things can be cut apart and reassembled to create something entirely new. Influences come from the margins of illuminated manuscripts, the lives of saints, the paintings of Bosch, and medieval Christian iconography. The process of making and casting plaster molds informs and supports my work. From the visible seam lines that echo the divisions in the mold to the permutability of the cast objects, my tools have become a significant part of my conceptual framework. There are hybrids made of two different animals; grotesques that combine human and animal forms; figures that are upended and disoriented; all these fragments collide to create a strange world outside the boundaries of the everyday. I investigate strange things that live on the outside of normal, incongruous things that exist side by side, and subtle shifts that make us wonder and compel us to look again.

Antipodes

slip-cast porcelain, wood, paint & wax, 56" x 9" x 6", 2009





opposite: **Withhold**
slip-cast porcelain, 6" x 2.5" x 1.5", 2009

Mask
slip-cast porcelain, 6" x 2.5" x 1.5", 2009



Amanda Marcott

2010 MFA Graduate, New Mexico State University



I am interested in ideas and objects that surround the notions of protection and safety. The making of these objects serves as a meditation on the psychological state of perpetual readiness and the perverse action of fending off an emergency with prevention and preparedness while simultaneously readying for the inevitable emergency and response. Addressing both physical and psychological manifestations of protection and safety, I use materials to expose the lack of utility and exaggerated futility and frailties of my sculptural objects.

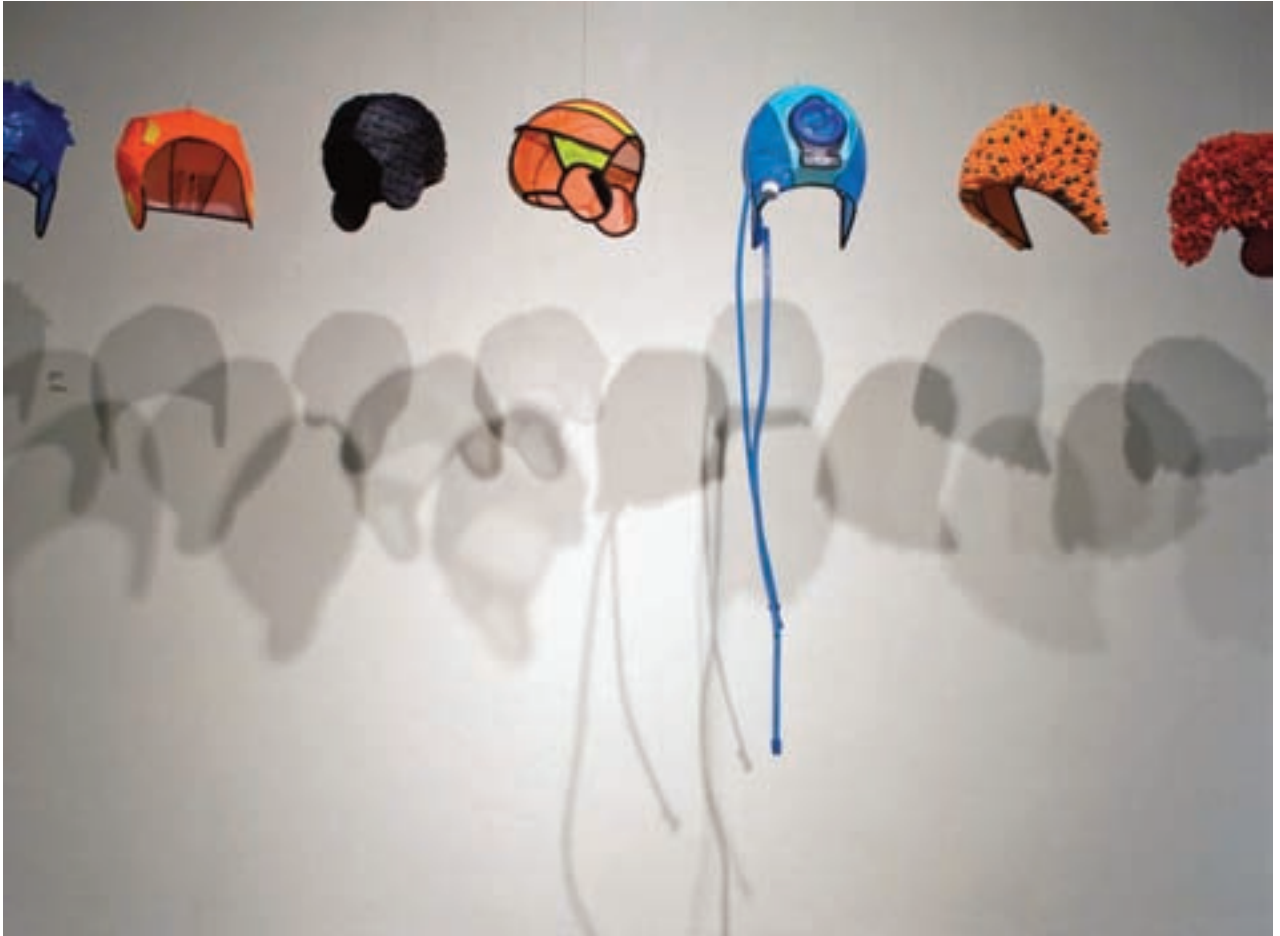
In This Life You Must...

recycled steel, fabric, sewing thread, 72" x 48" x 36", 2008





Preventative Measures
mixed media, 64" x 144" x 144", 2009



William McMahan

2010 MFA Graduate, Indiana University

I find nothing to be more expressive or evocative than the figure. Humans, animals, or suggestions of either are what interest and engage me the most as a viewer and as an artist. I have studied figure drawing and anatomy for years, and I am fascinated by subtleties in form and gesture, and by how emotion may be manipulated through slight shifts in posture or expression.

The subject of my recent prints is isolated and highly textured figures existing in indeterminate, expansive spaces. The figures are often off-balance, contorted, and constrained, sometimes by their environments, or more commonly by their own anatomy. Some of the figures are static and appear to be decaying and rotting, while others actively move about or grow new appendages.

I have been considering the figure itself as a landscape in my recent work, and the textures that I create within the figures are suggestive, but open to numerous interpretations regarding their origins and surface qualities. The largely voided backgrounds emphasize the figure, while simultaneously isolating it.

Figure Study 2
etching on copper, 24" x 18", 2010

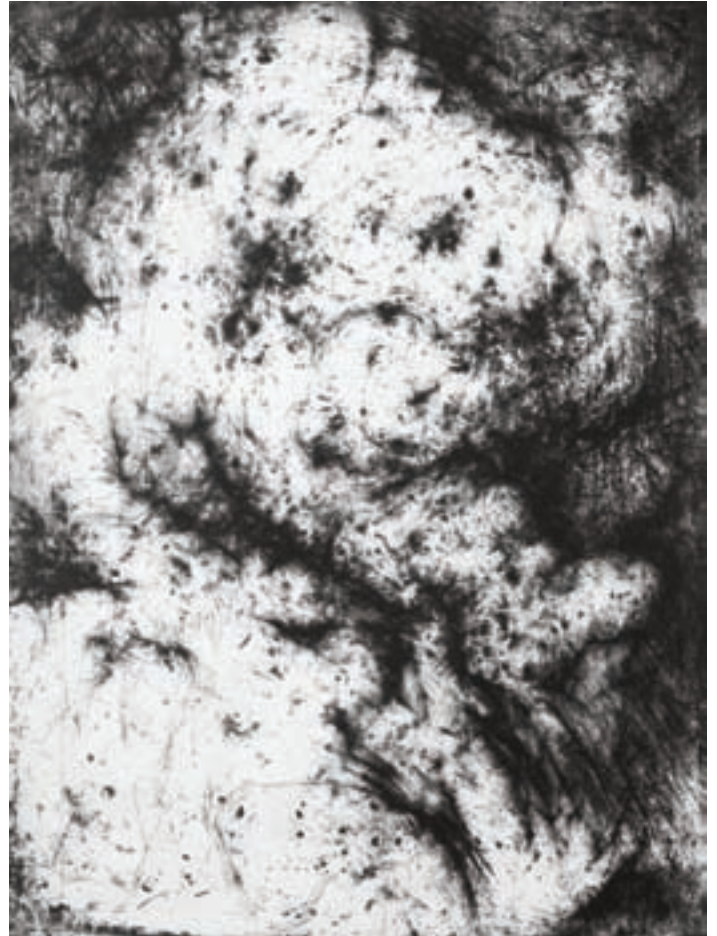


Figure Study 3

drypoint on copper, 24" x 18", 2010

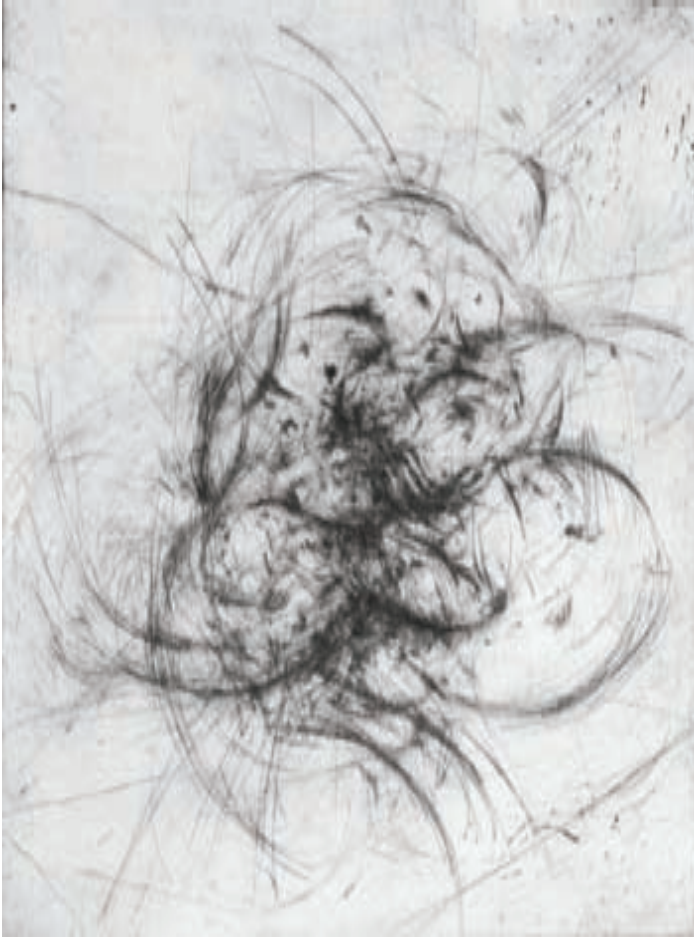


Figure Study 1
drypoint on copper, 24" x 18", 2010



Amanda Pfister

2010 MFA Graduate, Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville

Buildings and architecture are critical components of our communities; we experience life through our built environment. The socioeconomic system of capitalism informs how we ascribe meaning to these buildings because it generates a variety of economic forces that determine when buildings are useful and when they become obsolete. Therefore, it can be argued that our economy, which is driven by a capitalist system, greatly shapes our sense of place.

I have chosen to explore how economic forces impact our sense of place by photographing closed car dealerships. The car dealership help visualize the consequences for communities when economies experience drastic decline. As corporations choose to hire cheaper labor in other countries or implement production modes that require different structures, as people move from our urban core to newer suburbs, and as producers of the ultimate symbol of personal freedom in America (i.e. G.M. and Chrysler) falter after years of poor business choices, these buildings become monuments to the ideals of the past. This series examines the idea that changes in the broader economy evidenced by the transitions of buildings into obsolescence affect our communities.

Dodge, Overland Park, KS
archival inkjet print, 40" x 50" x 1", 2010



Buick, Ferguson, MO

archival inkjet print, 40" x 50" x 1", 2010



Chevrolet, Kearney, MO
archival inkjet print, 40" x 50" x 1", 2010



Construction

copper etching & aquatint, printed on Stonehenge, 16" x 18.5", 2009



Edifice

woodcut printed on gampi tissue, 17.75" x 29.75", 2010



Kasey Ramirez

Current Graduate Student, Indiana University

I draw and collect images of scaffolding and unfinished construction sites. I see them as beings with parts of themselves revealed or made transparent. I investigate these skeletal structures through repetitive mark-making and erasure, building and deconstructing them. Construction and Edifice are like portraits in which I reflect the human qualities of buildings using the character of the drawn marks to signify strength and fragility. The materials I use allow for delicate scraping and abrasion that mimic dirt, water, atmosphere and the tenuous architectural members that support these constructions. While these buildings have physical presence, they are also indefinite, vaporous as a remembered dream. They dissolve into the surrounding space as part of the same inseparable fabric.



Amy Royer

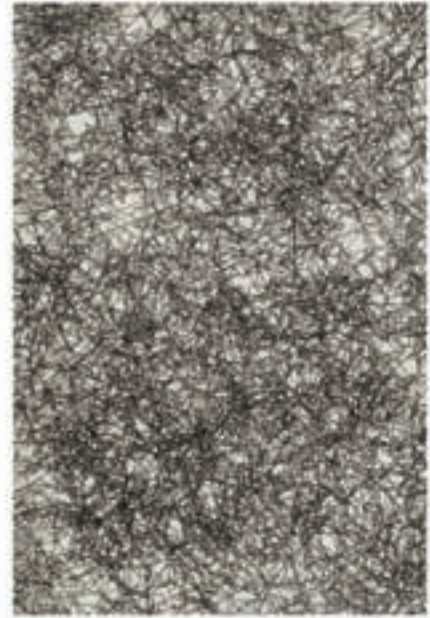
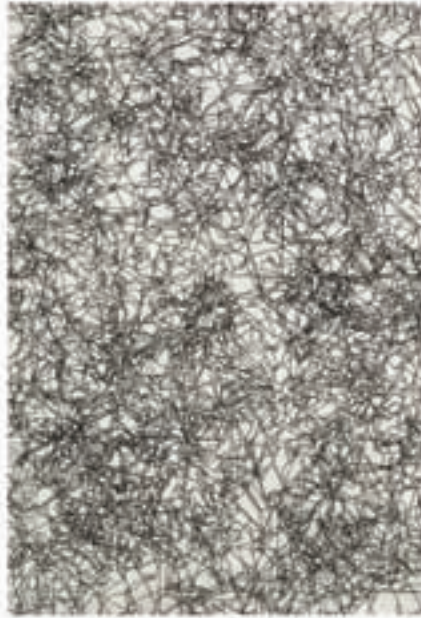
Current Graduate Student, Brigham Young University



We live in a complex world full of an array of choices. In order to find a balance in these complexities we create pattern in our lives. What I find interesting is that patterns are built all around us, through our daily activities, nature, cultural statements and so forth to bring stability, to bring awareness. They define who we are. In addition, many of the patterns seem very calculated and controlled. In my art, my ideas have centered on the use of the grid in an effort to create an initial controlled environment. In juxtaposition to the idea of a highly calculated work method, I have randomly selected systems, through line, to then be placed throughout the grid. In addition, random placement has been incorporated to take some of the control away and in the end an evolved piece of work arrives that is centered in chaos yet still institutes order. It is a therapeutic way of taking what I see in the world, abstracting it even further, and, in the end, having a patterned outcome that is more enjoyable than those that are continually calculated each day.

Individual

line etching, 17" x 34.5", 2009





Dominic Sansone

2010 MFA Graduate, Herron School of Art and Design



Through my current body of artwork I am venturing to give voice to the violence of humankind and the role each of us play in facilitating an endless cycle of barbarity. Having grown up in the 1980s I can recall a great fear of the Soviet Union and nuclear obliteration at their hands, and now, thanks to the nightly news, my son may have radical Islamists and terrorists as the source for his nightmares. Always a new enemy, always some new evil to vanquish, war without end.

Americans, in particular, have seemingly become addicted to the state of war, in part, due to our desensitization at the hands of the media we consume. From video games glorifying killing, to twenty-four hour coverage of conflicts, to real time video of smart bombs dropping down chimneys; we have an endless supply of stimuli to numb ourselves. The pain and suffering endured by others becomes nothing more than flickering images on a screen.

Unfortunately we seem, as a collective race, unable to say "no" when called upon to wreak havoc, whether due to unswerving nationalism, religious zealotry, or desire for greater riches; concern for our fellow humans is set adrift. In the end, these works do not answer the questions or propose solutions, but hopefully cause the viewer to consider, with more than a cursory glance, the visual culture of our cities, our entertainment, our public art, and our media.

Invaders Must Die
bronze, 117" x 13" x 13", 2009





Giulio Gavotti's Decision

cherry & steel, 42" x 42" x 42", 2010



Louis Tortora

Current Graduate Student, College of Saint Rose

My images represent the coexistence of human and animal mortality. In our past history, human ancestors used the foundation of myth to tell stories of beasts within the human world. In Rome, Romulus and Remus are a known beast/human myth and in North America, the Aztecs along with the Native Americans used images of animals and humans to show the relationship of the two. The relationship still exists today.

My photographs are not just about taking a picture but are a process of collecting the heads along with other parts, I get inspiration from what I collect because I have no idea where my next image is going to take me.

Untitled #1/Female Profile

DPS, 24" x 24", 2009





Difference



About Manifest

Founded in May of 2004, Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization headquartered in the urban neighborhood of East Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. The elegant street level exhibition space is minutes away from downtown Cincinnati, and the numerous academic institutions of higher learning in the region. It is also within easy walking distance of a diversely populated historic neighborhood with residents from all walks of life. The galleries are free and open to the public five hours a day, five days a week, presenting works by students and professionals from around the world. The Manifest Drawing Center Studio is located in the nearby Walnut Hills Essex Studios Complex.

Manifest is supported by grants and public donations and has the goal to support student professionalism, integrate the arts into the urban residential community and raise the bar on artistic standards. The mission also includes the exploration of the relationship between art and design, as well as the ongoing support and display of drawing in all its various forms.

Mission

Manifest stands for the quality presentation, experience, and documentation of the visual arts, engaging students, professionals, and the public from around the world through accessible world-class exhibits, studio programs, and publications.

Manifest Gallery

...a neighborhood gallery for the world.

Manifest Press

...take every exhibit home.

Manifest Drawing Center Studio

...because learning to draw is learning to see.

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