

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition  
"Eye Tricks" on display at the Walsh Gallery,  
12 November - 15 December, 2007

FRONT COVER: Image Courtesy of Robert Petrick  
Artists appear in alphabetical order  
All photographs are courtesy of the artists  
unless otherwise noted

©2007 Seton Hall University  
All rights reserved

No content from this book may be reproduced,  
stored, or transmitted in any form. Mechanical,  
electronic, photocopying, or recording of the material  
enclosed must be accompanied by the written  
permission of The Board of Trustees,  
Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey

The exhibition was curated by  
Jeanne Brasile, Director, Walsh Gallery  
and Jason Marquis

The catalog was edited by Jason Marquis  
and supervised by Jeanne Brasile

Seton Hall University  
400 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange, NJ 07079 USA  
Phone: 973-275-2033  
Fax: 973-761-9550  
[www.shu.edu](http://www.shu.edu)



## ILLUSION / ELUSION

BY JASON MARQUIS

Legend has it that the Greek painter Apelles was once challenged by his rival to settle who could paint the most life-like picture. The victor would be known throughout the Aegean as the greatest painter alive. Time passed and he soon received word that the aggressor had finished and was waiting.

Upon visiting his opponent's studio, Apelles found the man standing next to a painting meticulously depicting a cornucopia overflowing with fruit. As they stood there a bird flew in through the window, and taking the fruit to be real, it dove at the picture only to crash against it and fall to the floor. "Look how I can fool nature herself!" exclaimed his rival. Apelles was silent; he nodded and turned to the door beckoning the man outside with his finger and down the road back to his home.

Entering Apelles' studio the two encountered a sparse room populated with only a cloth-covered easel in the corner.

Apelles asked the man to remove the cover and reveal the painting beneath. The opponent extended his hand to do so, but instead of grasping the fold in the fabric, his fingers slipped along wet paint. The man's eyes grew large. It was a painting! With a smile Apelles quipped, "It is one thing to fool nature, and yet another to fool the artist."

At the center of the exhibition "Eye Tricks" is the historical association art has with illusion. Indeed it is a popular hallmark of Western art as this legend concerning Apelles suggests. But beyond immediate associations with history, illusion is also at its core a concept informed by technology.

Linear perspective is a classic example of illusion as much as it is a technology. Visually, it denies the two-dimensionality of the picture plane and attempts to fool the viewer into believing space recedes behind whatever material the artist used as a support. Likewise, it is the practical application of knowledge:

a systematic treatment of an art or craft. The artist draws converging lines in order to suggest volume and depth. Interestingly enough science is also drawn into the definition since, in the case of perspective, success has much to do with the binary nature of our eyes. Illusion is thus an amalgamation of technology and science as much as it is an aesthetic game.

As technology advanced through the 18th and 19th centuries, so did the artist's repertoire of mediums and illusory tools. Factory produced oil paints, when they proved stable, allowed for an intense *trompe-l'oeil* (to fool the eye) effect greatly admired by enlightened critics. Film, first still then moving, proved effective for capturing the likeness of our environment; aiding the replication of it in traditional mediums and experimentation with new ones. Today, reflecting on the past, illusion is a mine for contemporary artists looking to capitalize on its history with self-aware irony. And now computers revolutionize the way artists produce

and how audiences receive the objects they generate. Artists engage illusion with scientific apparatuses like lenticulars, holograms, giclée, motors and microscopes to name but a few.

Yet for all our supposed advances in the field of art appreciation, there remains a nagging reaction among many that technology and science are not artful systems of thought, but in fact harmful to creative processes. There is the tendency to elude revisionist concepts and revert to traditional, linear modes of thought. Take for example the plight of digital artists who often think twice before using a Photoshop program to enhance their images. This is because some critics believe computer programs create a degree of separation between the producer and the product. The implication is that the creators of Photoshop have a credit to the final picture, and such a thought would degrade the popular image of the artist as "genius"; a habit of the modernist age we can't seem to kick.

It would seem the underlying insecurity we are all afraid to confront is this: when does science and technology become art? That is, when does technology, as application of knowledge, cross over to an artform and avenue of expression?

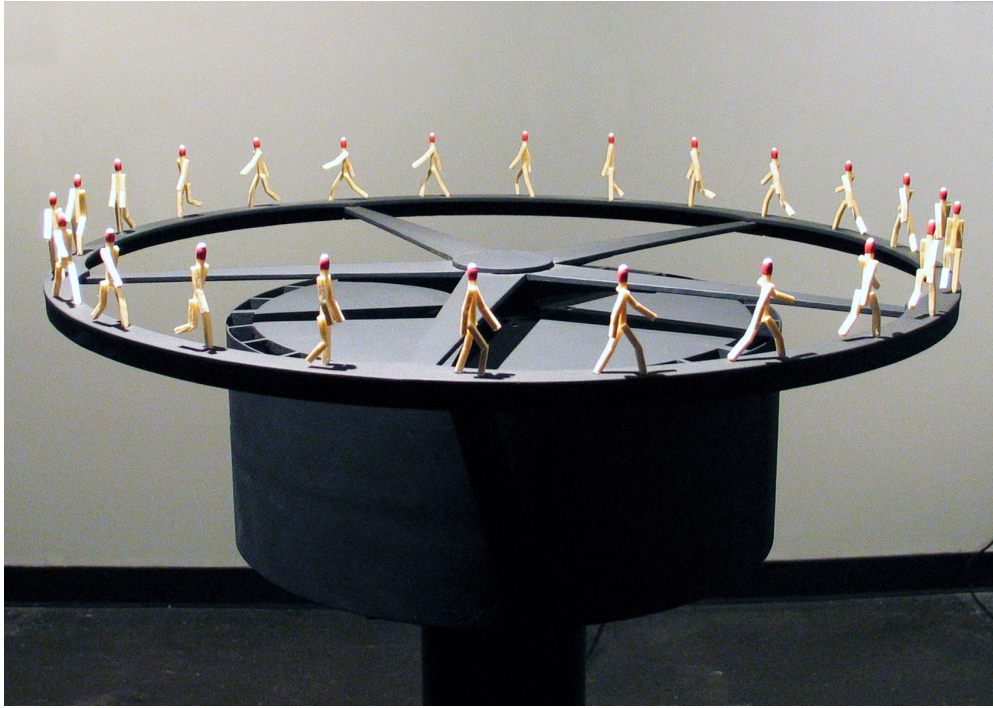
There are no easy answers to these questions. Apelles himself could not grasp perspective, nor was he even remotely equipped with the processing power of modern computers. However, the danger of excluding branches of knowledge such as technology and science from informing artistic production – an objective strengthened by 250 years of Western aestheticism – is that we will continue to think of art in linear modes of thought: primarily the Canon, traditional historical movements and limited, dualistic analytical concepts.

The objective of this exhibition is to illuminate the gray area between science, technology and art; to illustrate that these categories are not exclusive, but merely descriptors of human

production with many interesting and overlapping characteristics; and finally, to continue to liberalize the common conception of creative mediums and promote their value.

*Jason Marquis is a graduate student pursuing a Master degree in Museum Professions at Seton Hall University. He practices conservation in New York, writes and curates independently.*

**WORKS**



**Ryan Buysens** *Promenade*: electric motor, micro-controller, wood, metal, matches, 2006



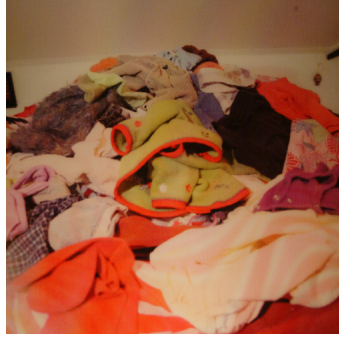
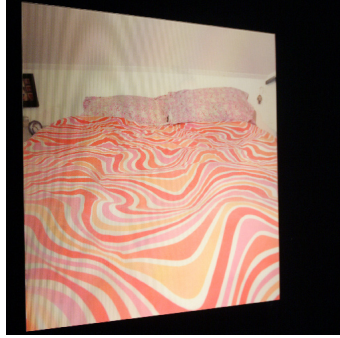
**Christina P. Day** *Untitled (Stairs)*: custom built staircase and found railing in forced perspective, 2006





*Chris Dean Jump and Shout, Work it Out: lenticular, 2006*

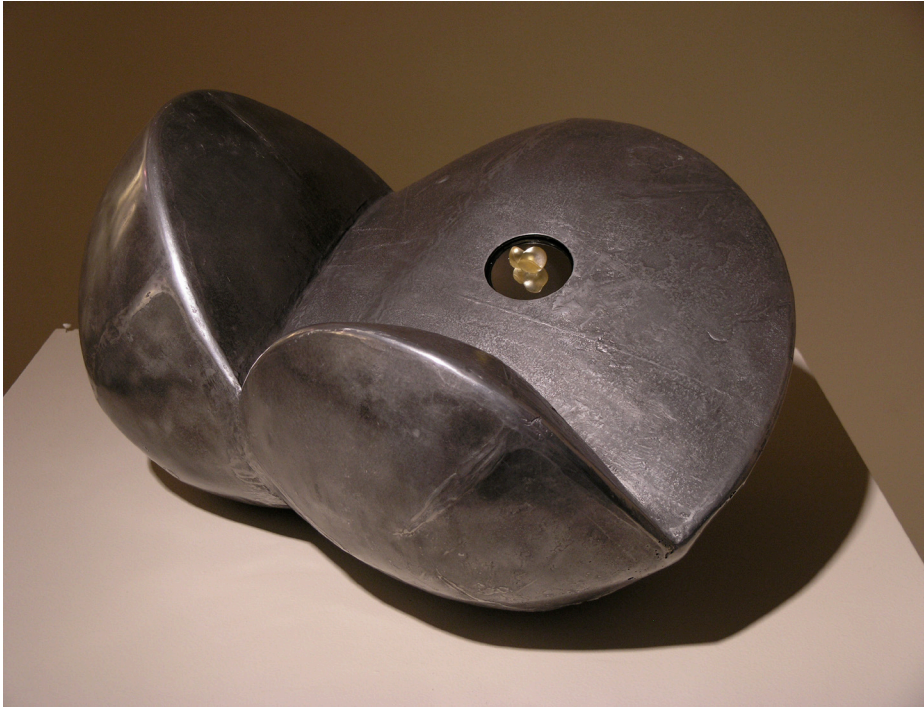
**Erika de Vries** *Laundry* and *Merry Widow*: archival ink jet prints  
'lenticular' mounted to viewing plexiglass, 2006  
Image courtesy of the Artist and M. Y. Art Prospects, New York

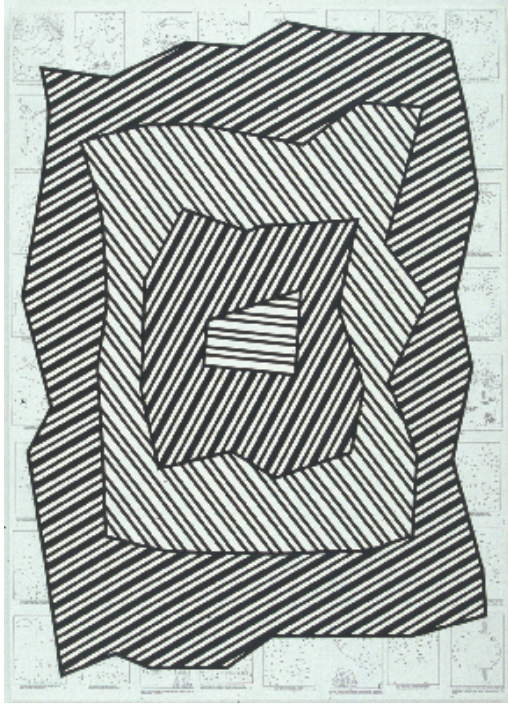




Mark Epstein John Turns A Corner: animation still, 2007

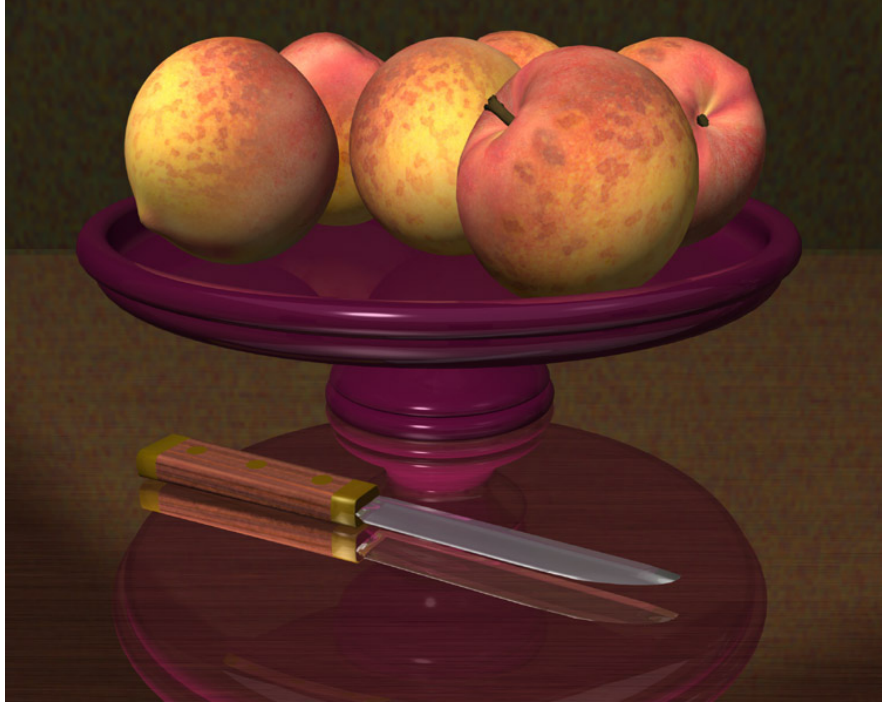
**Francis Fox Essence:** aluminum, plastic and polyurethane resin, 2005





**Keith Gamache** *Crazy 8's*: Acid free masking on paper on canvas, 2002

Steve Gildea *Peaches*: giclée print (3D computer graphic), 2003

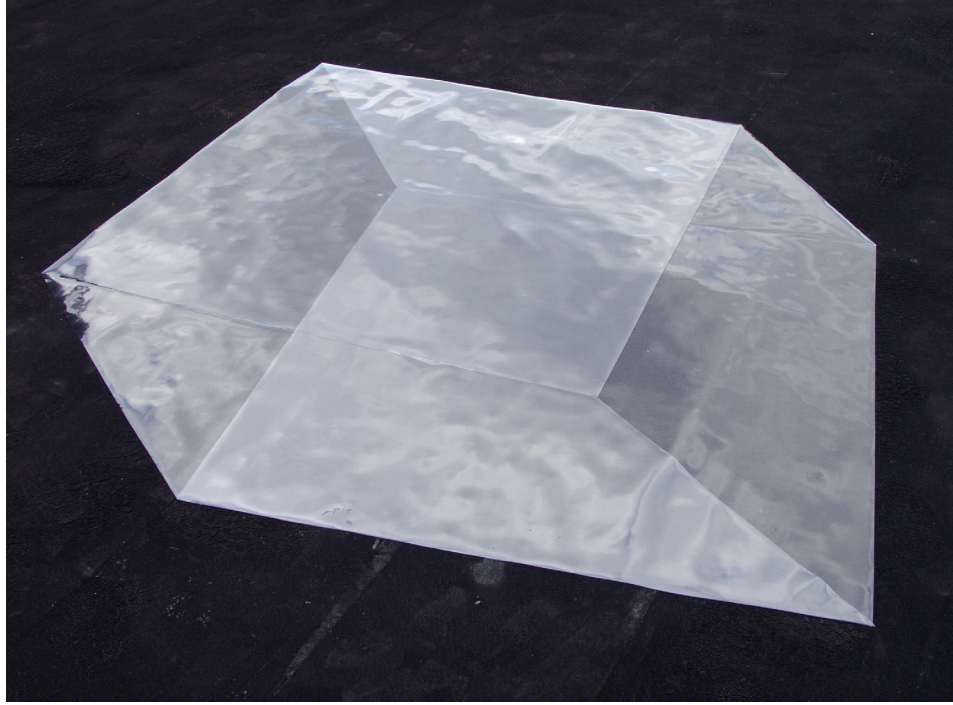




**Kathy Goodell Luna:** glass, silver leaf, beads, wood, 2007



**Ryan Higgins** *Cube: vinyl*, 2007





**Friedhard Kiekeben** *Friction*: installation, 2007

**Kenn Kotara** *To Tame The Ocean At Its Source*: acrylic, fiberglass screen, fiberglass screen and hardware, 2007



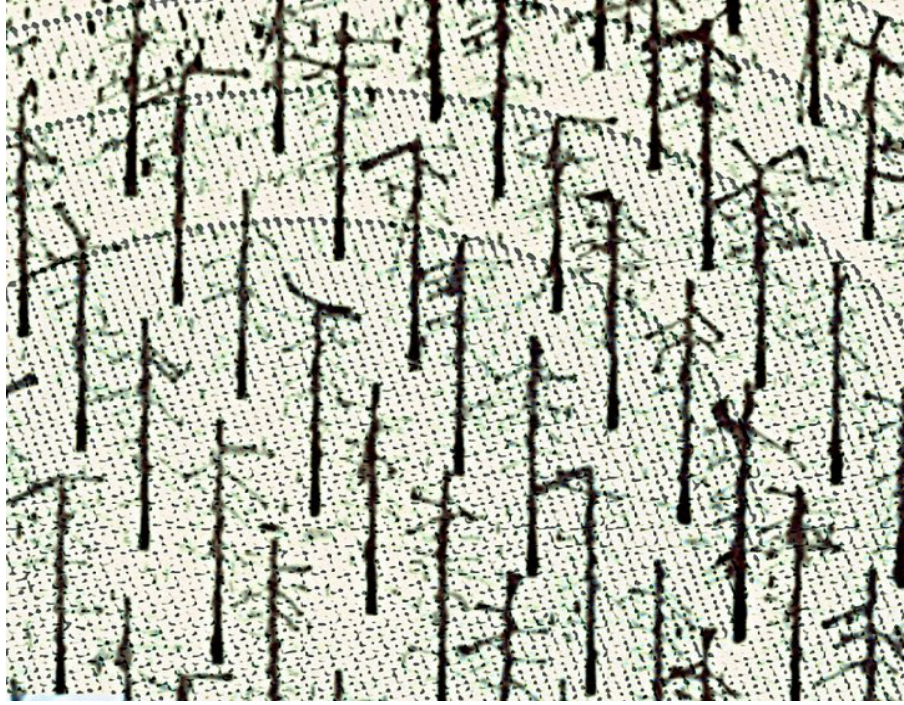
**Kenn Kotara** *Autoportrait*: acrylic, fiberglass screen and hardware, 2006

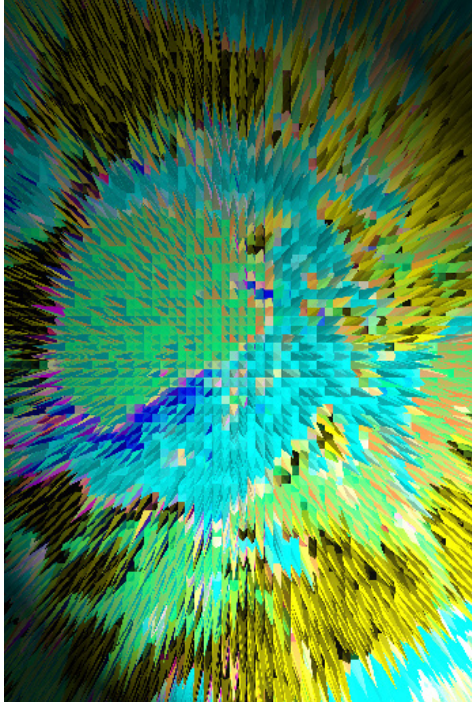




**Yngvar Larsen** *Ghost W 007*: digital print, electric motor, 2007

Jack Mason See *Trees*: nanograph, 2005

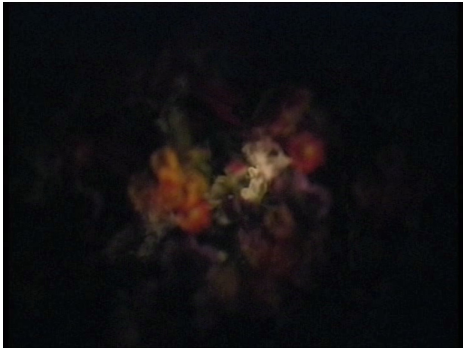




**Cris Orfescu *Fireworks 8 (1/10): nanoart, 2007***

**Robert Petrick Space: composite plastic, 2004**

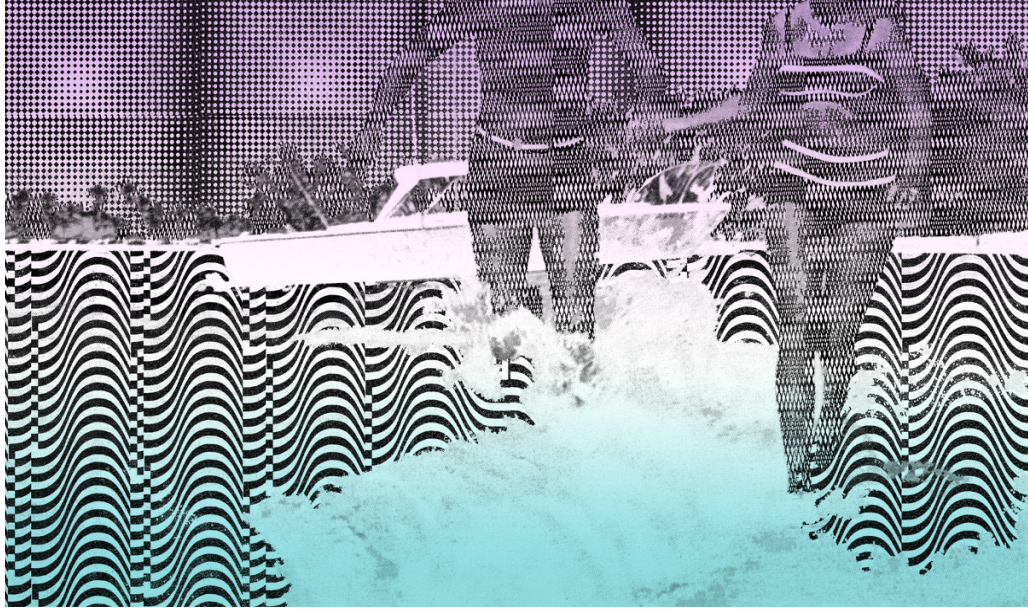


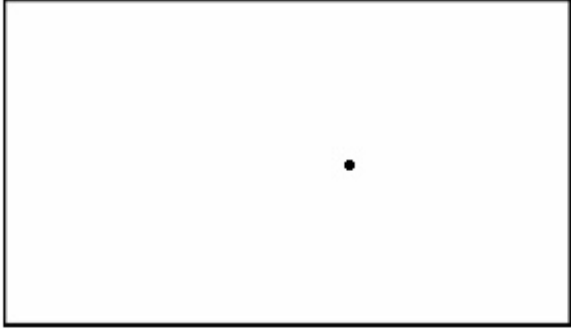
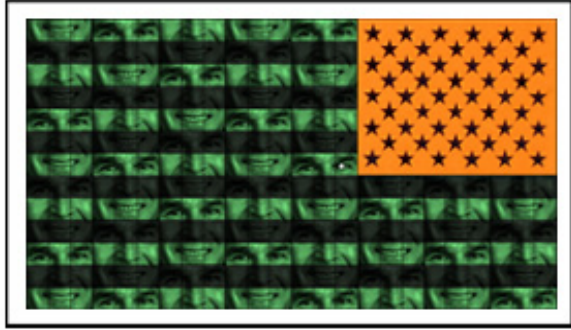


Jacki Storey *Vanitas*: video, 2006



Joshua Tonies *Bermuda Tesseract*: archival inkjet print, 2007





**Florence Weisz Bushart** *Junior Afterimage Flag*: Digital print collage, 2007

The Walsh Gallery would like to thank the following:

Xueming Bao

Dee Cameron

Paul Chao

William Coronado

Evonne Davis

Alan Delozier

Jacob Dillard

Randolph Dorcent

Gallery Aferro, Newark

Asha Ganpat

Catriona Hill

Howard Hurst

Hanae Ko

Chris Lee

Joe Lucia

Howard McGinn

Meggie Mermigas

Brian Mil

M.Y. Art Prospects, New York

Ron Myzie

Katherine Ogelvie

Maria Silvestri

Marie Somers

The Walsh Gallery Advisory Board

Dorothea Wefing

Emma Wilcox

Miyako Yoshinaga

