

MFA 2012

ANYAEJI BAKER BALDEON BELMER CARDENAS COLLINS COX DURHAM
FALKER KIM KROHN LONG MCINERNEY MCMAHAN MEIER MILLITZER
NORRIS PERNICIARO SQUIRES WELLS WOOD WOODARD WRIGHT

MFA 2012 THESIS EXHIBITION
May 4–August 6, 2012

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other marginalized groups. Yet in the past 60 years, we have come to recognize that members of these groups are entitled to the full measure of rights and rights, because, like all people, they share a common humanity.

This recognition did not occur all at once. It evolved over time. And as it did, we understood that we were honoring rights that people always had rather than creating new or special rights for them. Like being a woman, like being a racial, religious, tribal, or ethnic minority, being LGBT does not make you less human. And that is why gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights.

It is a violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, or because they do not conform to cultural about how men and women should look or behave. It is a violation of human rights when governments declare it illegal to be gay, or allow those who gay people to go unpunished. It is a violation of human rights when lesbian or transgendered women are subjected to so-called "corrective" rape, or subjected to hormone treatments, or when people are murdered after public calls for violence toward gays or when they are forced to flee their native and seek asylum in other lands to save their lives. And it is a violation of human rights when life-saving care is withheld from people because they are gay. No matter we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are all equally entitled to our human rights and dignity.

The second issue is a question of whether homosexuality arises from a particular part of the world. Some seem to believe it is a Western phenomenon, and therefore people outside the West have grounds to reject it. Well, in reality, gay people are born into and belong to every society



BUZZ SPECTOR

*Dean, College and Graduate School of Art
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts*

Looking at a work of art isn't just a way of locating its social commentary, as if the thing itself was simply an element in a rebus to be decoded (like an eye for an "I"). Not every artwork is close to language, but by the same token not all language is close to sense. Imagination is freed up, so to speak, in the presence of art, and imaginative writing carries the vividness of that experience to the response.

With this premise in mind, we invited emerging writers in several graduate programs at Washington University in St. Louis to collaborate with the emerging artists in this year's MFA exhibition at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum in pairings that join responsive language to works of visual art. The result is this publication, which includes, in addition to student artist statements, a number of brief essays or more experimental texts about the art—written by graduate students in the University's other MFA program, Creative Writing, as well as by advanced degree candidates in Art History, Comparative Literature, and Germanic Languages & Literatures.

The exhibition for which this publication serves as document was excellently curated by Meredith Malone, associate curator at the Kemper Art Museum. Francesca Wilmott, assistant registrar, oversaw the installation

with the able assistance of Ron Weaver, exhibitions preparator, and Jan Hessel, facilities manager & art preparatory. Allison Taylor, manager of education programs, and Stephanie Ruse, school and community programs assistant, created educational programming around the MFA exhibition. All of this effort took place with the encouragement and sponsorship of Sabine Eckmann, the Kemper Art Museum's director and chief curator, and Carmon Colangelo, dean of the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts.

This publication is an outgrowth of conversations that included Patricia Olynyk, director of the Graduate School of Art; Marshall N. Klimasewski, writer-in-residence, Graduate Program in Creative Writing; Elizabeth C. Childs, associate professor and chair, Art History & Archaeology Department; Lutz Koepnick, professor of German, Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures; and Jane E. Neidhardt, managing editor of publications at the Kemper Art Museum. The texts of writers and artists alike were edited by Eileen G'Sell of the Kemper Art Museum's Publications Department. The support of these interdisciplinary colleagues exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and exploration that can be seen in the creative efforts presented here.



PATRICIA OLYNYK

*Director, Graduate School of Art,
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts,
Florence and Frank Bush Professor of Art*

Think, Make, Show and Tell

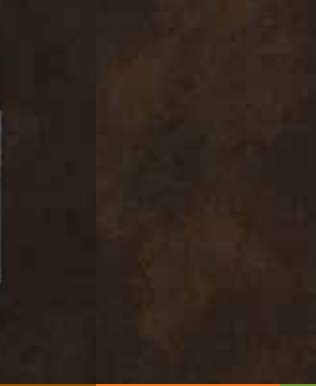
Recent dramatic cultural shifts—from rapidly escalating globalization in an unstable sociopolitical climate, to a seemingly infinite array of evolving technologies—all shape and inform today’s increasingly complex art world. With this comes the demand to reimagine art education for the current moment. Socially engaged, situated/site-specific, post-studio, de-skilled, “maker movement,” and DIY forms of aesthetic practice, to name a few, have surfaced both outside the academy and within, activating a vital reassessment of teaching and learning befitting a graduate program in a research institution.

The MFA program in Visual Art in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts presents a dynamic, hyperbolic landscape of new concepts, materials, and strategies of production, offering a wide range of potentials for the emerging artist. For example, the Multiple Feminisms Lecture Series, sponsored by the University’s Diversity Initiative, brought new voices to campus to investigate the ongoing cultural debate over sexuality and gender and its effects upon modern art, visual culture, and academic practices. Also, the inauguration of the Creative Research Institute Fellowship Program this past year—

which brought to campus an outside curator, film and media scholar, architect, and engineer—has offered enhanced opportunities for students to embrace the broader world of ideas through curatorial experience, a range of interactive engagement, cooperative and community-based work, and media theory. Not surprisingly, the prospect of an integrated practice inflected several of the works that are included in this year’s MFA Thesis Exhibition.

Another distinguishing feature of the MFA program is the collaboration between the Graduate School of Art and the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. Part survey, part curatorial selection, the exhibition showcases the capstone projects of the outgoing class. Each year’s unique arrangement compels all involved to consider the critical and practical issues intrinsic to the works on view within the museum environment as well as the role of exhibition documentation.

It has been a pleasure to collaborate on the MFA publication for the fourth year in a row, not only because it serves as an essential archive of the accomplishments of our diverse graduate body, but it tracks and records the various trends and moves of the program itself in an increasingly borderless and shifting world.



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My endeavor for art, as a social practice, is to raise the level of collaborative productions in resolving environmental problems, with the intent to redirect the dialogue from politicized interventionist artworks to effective cultural critique. Reusing materials through the transformation of an object's physical state, I depict the limitations of mechanized recycling and the decline of some traditional craft processes—highlighting the environmental implications of domestic waste accumulation and the extensively politicized archaeology of modern consumption.

I choose to work with two main global environmental pollutants—discarded plastic bags and bottles—based on their popularity in my home country, Nigeria. Visually expressing the domestic object's possible transition from a discarded piece to something aesthetic or functional, the forms are conceived using the traditional craft skills of loom weaving and Nigerian thread braiding, or threading.¹ Braiding and weaving the bags, and upholstering the bottles with the bags, enables a complexity of sculptural forms allowing for multiple interpretations. Most of the spiral-patterned, organic forms I make reference household furniture, architectural structures, and fabric—like tables, chairs, wall partitions, tapestry, and chair upholstery. I envisage this multiplicity of uses while retaining the physical state of the materials. Sometimes I include cans, wood, metal, and other found objects to visually complement my primary mediums, and because I think other materials besides plastic bags and bottles can be revalued.

My ubiquitous use of the plastic bags and their exaggerated repetition serve to emphasize three things: the medium (the large amount of used plastic bags and bottles generated through human consumption); the craft process (traditional hair threading and weaving); and the intentions of my work (to portray the potentials of discarded materials, to modernize a traditional skill showing the alternative use value, and to reflect the importance of revaluing).

I consider my process a metaphor because it shares the creative spirit of craft labor with the object's user, and also because it weaves together plastic (a Western invention) with

¹ The hairstyle technique best known as 'threading' originated from West Africa and became popular in parts of East and Central Africa. It is the coiling of a piece (or more than one) of thread or twine around a section of hair.

an African concept, threading, fostering that cultural synergy that brings about progress. My expectation is that this method will be perceived as a viable economic resource, reflecting Nigeria's culture and traditions while serving an environmental need.

Aesthetic recycling should not end in protest against high culture and beauty, as seen in subversive forms of much contemporary art. Neither should reuse be allowed to drift into a mere panoply of reclaimed materials. There should be an alliance to foster intervention and function since the problem of environmental waste is one that affects all fields. As much as I see the limitations of recycling, the intention of my work is not to oppose it nor to criticize its drawbacks. Rather, I call for alternative systems to environmental waste disposal practices: a creative practice that offers more pragmatic solutions rather than strictly visual commentary.

Ifeoma Ugonnwa Anyaeji
Oche Onodu (Sitting Chair), 2012
 Repurposed plastic bags, bottles and cans,
 metal rods, wood, and twine, 120 x 67 3/16 x
 55 3/16" (chair); 27 x 17 x 16" (stool)
 Digital video on DVD, 6 min.





ELISSA YUKIKO WEICHBRODT
on JE Baker

How Will This Be, JE Baker's video and paper environment, makes formal and narrative references to a familiar figure in Western art, that of the Virgin Mary. In the Bible, when the Angel Gabriel first approaches Mary to announce that she will bear a son, Mary responds with a question: "How will this be?" By mixing the material and ephemeral, sacred and profane, animal and human, Baker evokes a similar sense of confusion mingled with awe.

Like sagging skin, an expanse of handmade paper pulls away from the gallery walls, creating a soft protrusion where we would expect to find a corner's sharp right angle. Seemingly fragile, the wrinkled, drooping paper bears traces of a kind of traumatic history: embedded grit, bilious orange and pink stains, fibrous clots, and the faint stamp, in rust, of a storm drain grate. Over this already irregular surface, a coating of raw milk and shellac forms a kind of second skin, a curdled, cracked crust with a lingering, sour scent. The seductively tactile nature of the paper operates in tension with the discomfiting intimacy, both visual and olfactory, of a body on the brink of collapse.

A tall, narrow box sits just a few feet away from the wall, almost nestled in the swell of paper. Reminiscent of both a baptismal font or a pedestal without a sculpture, it beckons us to investigate, to approach and look down, and we unconsciously adopt a slumped posture that echoes the sagging wall. A video plays on a screen set down a couple inches into the pedestal, an image of dark sloshing water in a galvanized steel basin, swirling around the partially submerged body of a dead fawn. As the movement subsides, the indistinct reflection of a woman—soft, wavy hair tumbling around her shoulders—emerges.

The scene changes, and now we watch over the woman's shoulder as she gently bathes the fawn, cupping its head in one hand and running her other hand over its frail torso. She is clad in blue, the brilliant hue of lapis lazuli, traditionally used in Catholic art to denote the Virgin. Soon, the washing becomes a kind of baptism as she scoops handfuls of water and sprinkles them on the deer's head. As she lifts the fawn from the water, its body collapses limply and water drips, like tears, from its slender nose and delicate legs. Finally, purposefully, the woman carries the fawn to a strange nest of sorts, a cavity crafted from seemingly the same paper that hangs on the wall. She places it carefully amidst the folds, curled into itself, as if it has returned to its mother's belly.

Comparisons to the Pietà, the Virgin Mother cradling her dead son in her arms, are inescapable. Yet that icon of maternal anguish takes on a new resonance here as the dead son is replaced with a wild creature and the tomb is transformed into an open womb. Baker calls upon her viewers to bear witness to sorrow, to take on a ritual of mourning as their own, and, in doing so, to contemplate how such brushes with death can shape the way we live.





EMILY HANSON
on Natalie Baldeon

Consuming, shrouding, purging, revealing—Natalie Baldeon’s women simultaneously invite and repel. Using the body, at once her own and belonging to all women, Baldeon explores the metaphors of the female form. Dissatisfied with simplistic dualities, she engages a more ambiguous presentation of the woman.

Her woman is virtuous and licentious. She is both animalistic and weak. Just as she defiantly exposes the curves of her nude form, she is careful not to reveal her total self. Baldeon plays with notions of domesticity by belying any revelations of character expected

from the interior spaces she represents. Embracing formal references while using the triptych form, Baldeon enlivens her confrontation with any past representations of women. Her woman self-consciously defies expectation.

It is through these figures that Baldeon probes the construct of female representation. Though pleasingly coiled and always made up, her women thwart traditional visual pleasure. The unblemished skin of strong cheekbones pulls impossibly taut over the massive apple one woman labors to consume. Another single figure squats in a bathtub, caught in a regurgitative moment of autophagia, the smooth perfection of her skin concealing the inner havoc wreaked by her self-consumption. The three figures in the centerpiece continuously push away and draw in the viewer in a perverse dance of self-presentation. As perhaps three different women, or even three embodiments of the same woman, they all challenge an uncomplicated representation of femininity.

The artist’s paint, so sensuously rendered, confounds her abject crouching subjects. Luscious lips struggle to engulf the partially masticated apple core, sacrificing the finished effect of her lip color in the effort. Traditional attributes of feminine beauty mask the woman’s internal turmoil. Plump lips, smooth skin, and the marks of cosmetics communicate a conscious projection of self. But by shifting the viewing angle and showing her woman in these acts of consumption, she offers instead a façade clearly incongruous with the woman’s internal life.

Based on photographic representations of herself, Baldeon’s women transcend their origins, challenging our perception of the body. In doing so they reflect not only their careful creation, but become reflections of the act of looking itself.



Natalie Baldeon
To the Core, 2012
 Oil on canvas, 48 x 36"
Disjunction, 2012
 Oil on canvas, 48 x 64"
Autophagia (Now I Have Everything), 2012
 Oil on canvas, 48 x 36"



E. Thurston Belmer
Still Life, 2012
 Oil on canvas, 81 x 120"

RICKEY LAURENTIIS
 on E. Thurston Belmer

As in a Turning Gear

I came to it, for I was afraid. Afraid,
 for I had seen my own nakedness.

Not everything in my world will properly
 relate, it tells me. A ceiling might not
 meet a wall, a boy his father. The light,
 now with me, could be posed against me:
 knocked against my head, lingering, stubborn
 as a ghost. This was a sweet haunting. Baroque.

A plantation where not only the slaves lie still.
 Believe me. I have seen what the still life
 wants seen. Because I could stand to look at it,
 I looked away. Past memory, afterimage, the smell
 of warm earth beneath my hands,
 which is oil. The shock of bone, which is oil.

What will it give up to me, what secret, what trouble,
 what problem-child, what history, what simple
 trauma, what Judas kiss, what strange finger, mirage,
 idea of mirage, varnish, moss over the woman's
 gray eyes though she's not a woman, moss
 over the soldier's dropped eyes, what fever, what texture,
 what magnificent error cut to the exact width
 of my thinking, my fear, which has a mouth, which moans:

You who will not escape so easily from this, get up,
 stand up, raise your arms anyway for the arrival of wings.



NICHOLAS TAMARKIN
on Lauren Cardenas

Tension diminishes as the viewer increases the distance between the eye and the work. Stillness and the sense of something impending can be felt only when allowing the work to encompass our entire field of vision. Shapes and their shadows become less important as scope demands an intimacy. The subtle digital grains lose resolution when viewed up close, becoming ever more important: the work is a topological map, a survey of an interior area.

Viewers are struck not only by the scope that the work physically demands of them, but also by the fact that this map charts an actual

exterior. Standing in front of the image, one feels as though he is looking down. While the details of the work are not pointedly meta-physical, they do present a striking vision of a vacuum, or even a void. Cardenas scripts a vertiginous experience that cannot be essentially duplicated or accurately communicated. A sharp melancholia is counterbalanced with a great plane of calm; approaching the work signals acceptance of nothingness.

While not a meditation on mortality per se, the work tethers us to something else. Time exists only as a single moment when the final separation of the mind from the body has a point of happening. In this sense the work is a rehearsal of an encounter with something perhaps called "the infinite." Or perhaps it is only a prescient gift, remembering forward. The artist gives a gift here not of herself, but as a messenger from the void she has come to know.



Lauren Cardenas
Untitled (The View), 2012
Digital print on vinyl, 141 x 84"

LAUREN CARDENAS

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA12



Adrian Cox
**Border Creature:
Portrait I, 2011**
Oil on canvas, 31 x 24"
The Lovers, 2012
Oil on canvas, 34 x 47"
**Border Creature:
Portrait III, 2012**
Oil on canvas, 31 x 24"



ADRIAN COX

"[P]ainting is the art of bodies, in that it only knows about skin, being skin through and through. Another name for local color is *carnation*. Carnation is the great challenge posed by those millions of bodies in paintings: not *incarnation*, where Spirit infuses the body, but *carnation* plain and simple, referring to the vibration, color, frequency, and nuance of a place, of an event of existence."

—Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*¹

The figures in my paintings offer themselves to be *felt*; their vulnerability as flesh is bared and opened. Orifices and protuberances create sites at which the skin outside meets with the skin inside, forming a continuous passage between the two that eradicats their distinct positions. These grotesques become *border creatures*, defined by indeterminate boundaries that merge, overflow, and extend into the surrounding landscape. By presenting the corporeal as an open body, the grotesque painting reveals the subject and, in turn, ourselves to be endlessly connected to the world around us. The world that opens itself to us is one full of growth and decay, shifting and transforming with our every extension. My work shows death as integral to this World of Becoming. Rather than celebrating death itself, however, I seek to make bearable a recognition of its deep connection to life. It is in this hope that I offer an exploration of the body as open, vulnerable, and on the threshold of boundlessness.

¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 31.



DOLLY LANINGA
on Maya Durham

The lab is a sleek dome in a clover field, all chrome and glass and reflected sunlight. Though it has been there as long as the girl can remember, in her youth she was more interested in the chirps and brindle, the musk and struggle, the lusty howling of the world around it. She inspected, she measured this world: she choreographed the war dance of belligerent robins and mapped the licking silver of the tides; she charted pea shoot growth and learned to predict when each larkspur would burst into bloom; she dreamed the cumin scent and geometric perfection of the Atlas moth long before she found one blinking up at her through the rushes.

Time passed. She grew longer, leaner, and impatient with the world—it had so many limits, so many rules. One night she passed the lab and looked through the window; in the glassy purple light she saw a white-coated figure pouring opaque liquid from one beaker into another, and then—a flash of light! When it faded, the white coat held the beaker up, gazed at the three red globes that appeared. A number of other white coats gathered around and applauded. Everywhere there were clean lines of test tubes and a spectrum of vapors.

At first they wouldn't let her in; she wriggled through the portal and nearly breached the inner chamber, only to shoot backwards onto her rump in the clover. She looked up and the white-coated bullies were all shaking their heads at her with identical frowns.

But she was persistent. She placed her latest findings—notes, samples, extractions—inside the portal for their approval. They passed her work around, conferred in little knots. In the end they waved her in, then stood in a faceless, sexless line before her; they told her with their bland eyes to prove herself.

She palmed a beaker, snaked a plated copper wire between her fingers. She began.

For six days she stood with her back to the white coats, her fingers a blur. At last: an unveiling. The white coats gathered round. She turned the knobs of the filter and not only did the shape of the waves on the oscilloscope round out, the birdsong in the field thickened and slowed, dripped over the contours of the trees, pooled among the roots. Then she twiddled the knobs again and the birdcalls ratcheted back up into a high register.

The white coats looked at each other, vibrated with anxiety, futility. They sensed she would not be restrained. Each of her experiments achieved a new level of impossibility. Her fingers lengthened and she did not sleep.

Long after the catastrophe and the girl's disappearance, the white coats remembered her final creation, the way it huddled wetly in the petri dish. When she shone a light upon its translucent skin, the white coats saw a matrix of veins plunging, twisting deep through the shivering flesh. Only then did it take its first breath.



Maya Durham
52 Ep03, 2012
Mixed-media installation,
dimensions variable



Erin Falker
Jezebel, 2012
 Wood wall, molding, fabric, and
 stepstool, 96 x 36 x 6"
 Digital video on DVD, 13:24 min.
They Really Talk, 2011
 Knit dolls on wood shell with audio
 component, dimensions variable

MELISSA OLSON
on Erin Falker

Falker's set of two video installations, *Compassionate Communication* and *Jezebel*, asks us to confront the ways in which markers of race, gender, and social class determine our habits of communication and self-expression. Her parallel framing devices for these videos consist of large rectangular panels covered in textured brown cloth that stand in telling contrast to the smooth white walls of the exhibition space. Drawing closer to the panels we hear a digitized voiceover describing 1960s precepts of nonviolent communication, while a small video screen at eye level shows a stream of masked young men performing a gestural language of gang signs, known as stacking, a practice that involves both knowledge and skill, yet transfers only messages of violence. The videos do not

simply reproduce stereotypes of African-American male violence, however. The nimble practiced movements of the men suggest the realization of self-expression through the body. Nonetheless, the "masking" of the video screen with its colorful bandanas calls attention to the fact that racialized social constructs often restrict the body's communicative potential.

Falker's corresponding work, *Jezebel*, presents black women and children moving and dancing before the camera on sidewalks, in parking lots, and in private homes, while a computerized voice recounts the history of campaigns against black female reproductive rights and of the exhibition of the black female body in Western culture. As we are required to view the images through a small peephole in the brown panel, we are forced to recognize the voyeuristic gaze that has been trained upon the black female body since the rise of imperial culture. Yet the videos included in Falker's sampling of youtube clips show us a variety of sensual bodies in motion. Some

are sexually suggestive, but as others are not, like those of a pregnant mother affectionately revealing her swollen belly before the camera and of children moving with unbound joy, *Jezebel* prompts us to rethink the conventional ways in which the black dancing body has been characterized in the Western world.

In the interactive installation *They Really Talk*, inert and prototypical forms become individual, communicative objects that break down our assumptions about race through playfulness and surprise. Hand-sewn dolls made of dark socks with colorful bits of red and white yarn for hair stare at us through friendly black button-eyes, asking to be picked up. When moved, the dolls speak—confiding their experiences, their beliefs, their perspectives about race. Falker's work thus employs our own curiosity for her provocative objects and turns that inquisitiveness inward, asking us to reevaluate our culturally imposed habits of racialized stereotyping.

Jieun Kim

St. Louis Dreamscape, 2012

Water-based pigment and
Flashe paint on Korean paper
mounted on wood panel, and
vinyl, 144 x 24 x 2"



CAITLIN TYLER
on Jieun Kim

St. Louis Dreamscape

In the mirror of her,
colors twitch like muscles,

an urge above the mind,
there is sky, the sky

peony-tinted away from her
in a curve, her way of craving

lavender, that arm, a true lip —

how still she could be
when she wanted to be.

Patterned, lipsticked.
She sometimes thinks

that there are many girls
in this one girl

with oystersweet eyes,
hair like a pumped heart —
do you see, how twinless
she is?

It is like a glass
this feeling, this feeling

shining in her.



JIEUN KIM

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA12



Howard Krohn
Untitled, 2012
Oil on canvas, 96 x 115"

HOWARD KROHN

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA12

Paint is malleable, accommodating rapid revision. Most of my process decisions stem from this desire for change and transformation. Raw, untamed gestures are the product of this method, resultant in paintings that recall Surrealist automatic techniques, Abstract Expressionism, primitivism, or even my own naïveté. I have abandoned palette and brush for a more unmitigated and direct experience—a practice that also speeds up the process of painting and accommodates more radical transformation of the image.

My practice is also an investigation into consciousness, how we construct meaning through habit and repetition. Simple forms and pigments have great symbolic potential. Awkward forms can embrace the limits of visual language to imply concepts and feelings that are difficult to communicate. I am interested in creating a safe haven for rudimentary, coincidental, and “ugly” gestures without advocating or glamorizing them.

Paintings are fleeting and ephemeral, but the paint is not; it always ends up somewhere. Some of my paintings change so radically that they become unrecognizable from their former iterations, but the labor invested in their transformations can be felt and makes the paintings potent.

Indeterminacy, resignation, and even failure are subjects of my work. Though typically eschewed, these conditions are defining characteristics of humanity. We are limited by our abilities and resources. We make do; we resign. Success typically follows the accomplishment of set goals and designs. But my goals are abstract; I pursue an intuitive feeling (a liking), and so my successes are similarly abstract and subjective. Since success is elusive—arriving only in moments of epiphany and partial clarity—I spend more time considering and contending with failure. I have come to believe that failure can better represent the “self” than how we succeed. Success is predicated on the accomplishment of goals, and for most goals, there are more ways to fail than to succeed. Although goals are usually necessitated by mechanical needs and cultural aspirations, the means of failure are not; they can be spectacularly personal.

Robert Long
Every cloud that fitted
on the horizon was hailed
as a liberator, 2012
Pallet rack, televisions, and
three digital videos on DVD,
144 x 102 x 48"



ROBERT WHITEHEAD
on Robert Long

Scape

Undone gasp to make a somehow home
in the minor myriad of this sky.
And beneath the sewer of the streets
more hazard sewer—so take this
folding breath and stampe it, take sound
and make it a motion of clouds. Stop—
take nothing because here we are
beginning to dream, as there we were once
dreaming, fish-hooked by it, stammering
like crows. Bleach-brained, land-scaped,
cut from our own electric. When the machine
reaches the end, that's the domestic end—
gurney, gullet, or bullet. Or string
like an answer to the question you never think to ask.
Too late— flux of truth, sour taproot, sunspot,
the capital city bombarded with clouds
and falling with ease. What means siphon,
bluster? Yellow bug on the bracket the sky built
blown away, SEE ALSO: burned, blemish remover,
malcontent. We were ship-wrecked
where there was no sea to ask for, no
wing without imagination. A starry vestral
or empty vessel, a demise like a verge—
so close up it's getting late
and all the distant notions are assembling
here, take my cloud and make of it a tribe.



ROBERT LONG

SAM FORD SCHOOL MFA12

ELISSA YUKIKO WEICHBRODT
on Marie Bannerot McInerney

What is the difference between wrapping, binding, and swaddling? We wrap a present as a means of increasing the recipient's anticipation. We bind a prisoner to prevent escape. We swaddle a baby as a means of comfort. And yet, the fundamental process of covering or enveloping is the same.

In Marie Bannerot McInerney's *The Swan Maiden*, the act of wrapping conjures up all of these varied connotations, using the domestic sphere as a manifestation of an imagined psychic space. The sculpture's foundation is a kind of skeleton of furniture—a mixture of wood, tarnished metal, and gold-green upholstery pitched precariously against and on each other. A pale damask settee is turned on its side, leaning just slightly on its sloping arms, while a chair upholstered in similar fabric tips forward into the upended sofa. A dark walnut end table and oak windsor chair tangle together at the apex of the pile with a metal bird cage perched on top. It is as if the furnishings of an entire living room have been swept up into a tightly rotating vortex. This sense of a swirling, magnetic pull is arrested, however, by the glut of household goods jammed into all empty spaces and the tight, shiny membrane of clear packing tape pulled tightly around the whole amalgamation.

The crinkling, glistening casing simultaneously reveals and conceals the objects within, initiating a kind of game: what, exactly, is trapped inside? There are yellowed bed and table linens, stacks of newspapers, self-help books, a tome on parenting wisdom, plastic food containers, and postcards from far-flung destinations. The bilious hues of old fabric and paper are punctuated with shots of acidic yellow and bright blue: the spines of *National Geographic* magazines, a cheap plastic bowl, the label on a self-help cassette tape, and a ceramic swan. The work evokes a sense of gluttony, intimating a lifetime of accumulation. Memories push tightly against each other, pressing against a barrier that allows for visibility but refuses physical access.

The title, *The Swan Maiden*, does not provide an easy interpretation but it does suggest a way of looking at the work. The old folk tale describes a young woman whose coat of feathers, which allows her to transform from a swan to a human, is wrested away from her by a hunter who then takes her as his bride. Eventually she regains her coat, returns to her swan form, and flies away. Like the maiden who remains trapped in a form she did not choose, McInerney's sculpture suggests a sense of perpetual longing, where the possibility of metamorphosis is stymied by entrapment.



Marie Bannerot McInerney
The Swan Maiden, 2012
Mixed-media installation,
108 x 72 x 48"



Nikki McMahan
echo12:01:15-02:16, 2012
Twelve C-prints, 44 x 44" each



RICKEY LAURENTIIS
on Nikki McMahan

Ghost
Where form moves, the need to know
the form moves. You're
stuck here, it says. Trapped in a fog
no degree of running can outrun.
So don't.
*

Now, after the heart,
after all feeling's been measured, exactly gridded,—
our bodies brought past their
limits, out, to their barest,
brightest
heat—we can face each other again,
we can breathe.
*

That was the song, over and over,
playing the empty house.



For me, visual art is an introspection into ways of seeing or experiencing. How we see—how sight is taught and developed and the experience of seeing itself—shapes our construction of meaning and conveyance of it. As in photography and film that construct a perceived reality and present ourselves to ourselves through technological methods, seeing itself is a product of consciousness, one that is not unfiltered. Through the everyday sensory conditioning of cone and rod vision, instinctual optical functions—such as face detection, discerning figure-ground relationships, and the psychology of symbols and archetypes—culminate into patterns and systems that shape civilization. Vision thus structures our consciousness and identity, as it is structured by them.

For me, painting is a way to perform the mechanics of my constructed consciousness. It is an ontological reverberation from my primordial center all the way through and out into the world in which I live and back into the centers of my consciousness. I focus on the distortion that happens between our



innermost points of subjectivity and the outermost reaches of objectivity—the disruption filtered and supplemented by the space it inhabits. By disrupting readability, my formal technique allows me to examine ideas of representation and abstraction through a multitude of lenses. That is to say that, when typically looking at objects, we cannot escape the veils of class, gender, history, and so on that stand between us and that object. For me, painting provides a kind of escape. It offers not just a way of seeing, but also a way of communication that relates to how I see and internalize the world, a philosophy of sight and being.

MICHAEL T. MEIER



Michael T. Meier
Under the Influence, 2012
The Frequency of Things, 2012
 Oil on canvas, 69 x 84," each

Katie Millitzer
Colloquies, 2012
Paper pulp and
recycled materials,
dimensions variable



Human beings have a profound impact on the natural world, our preferences reflected in the evolution of both plant and animal species. One of the most compelling examples is the emergence of the dog from the wolf. The dog developed into a valuable hunting companion and ally to early humans, but it has continued to evolve into whichever form human culture values at that moment in time. Dogs are essentially a by-product of human desire. Today the dog is often positioned as a family member, but it is still often valued more for its physical attributes than for its skills, temperament, or health. This shallow prioritization has led to a broken system that includes puppy mills, inbred genetic abnormalities, and the mass euthanization of strays.

In my art I investigate this history of transformation via human desire and the implications of artificial selection. My goal is to create works that highlight the importance of respecting other species on the planet: the choices we make in the economy of dogs have a lasting impact. Working with a variety of sculptural media, including clay, cast paper pulp, and recycled materials, I utilize pattern and repetition to harmonize with the idea of subtle generational transformation of the kind common to the evolution of the dog as a species. In both the natural world and in the artist's studio, changes in mindset and environment contribute to minute yet powerful deviations in form, eventually leading to significant change. Desire can act as a major catalyst in the world; my artwork reflects upon this powerful force on the species that shares our lives.

Reid G. Norris
This Passing Joy, 2012
Oil on canvas, 71 1/2 x 86"



ROSS RADER
on Reid G. Norris

Dear R—

Is there something I can do for you right now? Still trying still in bed. Your animal is trying to punish himself. Hell yes. I discovered a rust-colored cloth in the corner of his cage where he was from. I held it beneath the light and saw a crook in his shoulder with his good arm—your animal sounded asleep. I felt a joy and thought you must feel this kind of joy too—however, there is something dark and unsettling, like a scrim of shadow mantling a shield of light. You, animal, might be unwell, you ought to know.

Sincerely,
S-man

Dear, *dear* R—

Geez, I bear bad news I'm afraid: there's been an accident in the waffle iron. There is green-turtled ooze here and there, but what is more disheartening is how I've slipped away from it all when the clouds threatened rain.

Best,
V.

Dear R—

Well, I guess you could say I'm alone.

Afternoons, the hog's howl startles another string on my guitar to curl crisply from the board; it lashes me below my good eye. I've roamed in darker provinces with more heart, but here I watch the stool's legs alight with sunset, growl like bones—hollow where a heart might be. Lately, my smells have been all lemons. Pa once said it was a sign that silenced men have garnered flowers for me. Question: Where is the digging tool with the sharpest blade? Q: Which one of our fathers notched waves in legs and made them look real nice?

Alright,
W.G.

Dear R—

The woman who strode through the snow looked so strong! The snow did not crease in the fold, but rose as a wall to meet the bluest corner. You know, I cannot be certain if she was a woman. I do not even remember if this occurred or if I imagined it all! Ha! Though I can be sure of the children, who seemed overnight to have multiplied. They carried lemon peels, honey, pencils, broom handles, butter, butternut squash, and the cat. You know the path; it guided the woman. It was not difficult, though she appeared not the least bit comfortable.

I hope you've been well. My stomach, how it growls! Grr, it says. The cat is making killing motions in the bushes, thwack! so I must end here.

With love,
M.H.

MELISSA OLSON
on Kathleen Perniciaro

Recent sociology studies indicate the significant, often overlooked, influence of sports culture on concepts of nationality, gender, and race at nearly all levels of society—local, national, and international. Perniciaro's installations of material objects, however, are removed from the arenas of athletics and unexpectedly reassembled in an introspective enclosure, prompting us to recognize the impact that sports have in shaping both collective and individual identities.

After the Game is Before the Game features a dry erase playboard ready to swivel on

its double-wheeled base and draw taut the lines of the soccer goal net that extend from its upper edge to the ceiling like sinews stretched and waiting for release. Yet, the piece remains motionless—arrested in preparation for a rapid spin. On the ground around the piece, the white letters—x's and o's—only appear to have been flung free of the board during a forceful rotation. In fact, the piece remains fixed in its singular space above a small rectangle of green turf, engendering paradoxical impressions of both bound stasis and perpetual movement and actively resisting the linear progress of the game from beginning to end.

Instead, the work suggests a never-ending loop that reifies mental parameters as defined through the conventions of sports culture. Through the conspicuous absence of the body or its representations, Perniciaro's work draws attention to the cognitive patterns that sports promote in order to establish a concept of individual body within a culturally contingent space. Moreover, by removing the physical body from her work, Perniciaro provocatively resists the identificatory mode of sports spectatorship with which we are accustomed and invites us, instead, to consider the abstract social apparatuses that shape sports practice.

Correspondingly, *Talking in Circles* playfully stages two separate videos side by side on intersecting walls. Each shows an extreme close-up of an athletic field from the same height and angle, the projected images appearing like flattened planes of stiff shorn grass joined on an intersecting side by a red, spray-painted dividing line. A white soccer ball passes into the recess of the red line and back out again, sometimes flowing through the line onto the opposing wall, sometimes disappearing altogether. Its disjointed movement displaces the sense of causality and purpose that normally defines the passing of a ball in sports. Without it, we are left to recognize the mere repetitive patterning that drives the ball into the frame of the field. As the meanings we typically assign to the ball's movements become obsolete, we are led to consider alternatives to these and all social conventions, particularly as we enjoy those brief moments of rupture in which two balls magically seem to split from the center line to speed off in opposing directions.



KATHLEEN PERNICIARO



Kathleen Perniciaro
"After the game is before the game.", 2012
Dry erase board, casters, wood, electrical tape, AstroTurf, and soccer goal net, dimensions variable
Talking in Circles, 2012
Two-channel digital video on DVD, 2 min.



Emily Squires
Free and Equal in Dignity and Rights, 2012
 Four digital prints, 45 1/2 x 33" each
 Framed letter and envelope,
 15 1/4 x 12 1/4 x 1 3/4," each
 Table, chairs, mailbox, glitter, and
 postcards, dimensions variable
 In collaboration with Alan, Brittany, Cairo,
 Haló, G. Madison, Miguel, S. Seth, and Tom



NICHOLAS TAMARKIN
on Emily Squires

utopian. The two words that awkwardly dangle before the critic of "protest" art. The art queers superstition of questioning the artistic merits elements. future watches, biting its nails igation, with the public and art has situated itself within concerns , distraction, is significant constant questioning; the artist is compelled to question everything regarding iality and the expression of its nature with a pu s to the work, the gallery, the city. Fundamentally failure and denies limitations furtively from behind its rhetoric, the mailbox and postcards are become symbolic. What are we to make of the artistic representation of what is essentially a public forum for the debate archiv aits and the communication (full of hope and spirit and inevitably brought to a level obligation



Jamie Presson Wells
Reduce, Accumulate, Compress, Inject: Reduce, 2012
 Latex paint and Mylar on wood,
 84 x 48 x 96"
Reduce, Accumulate, Compress, Inject: Accumulate, 2012
 Digital photograph and Mylar,
 60 x 96 x 2 1/2"
Reduce, Accumulate, Compress, Inject: Compress, 2012
 Three digital videos on DVD, 7 min.

Our bodies are in inexorable interaction with the forms that surround them. This experience of form, and the order of our bodies in relation to it, creates a basis for the extension of human character into the environment. While the structures we inhabit and interact with influence our actions, imagination can enliven a space and inject the unexpected into a Cartesian given.

Our changing perceptions of a form in relation to the position of our bodies encourage an awareness of time passing. In Kant's theory of the imagination, there is a space between the reception of sensory data by our faculties and the formation of a concept in our minds.

Time, or, more specifically, speed, determines and limits the manner by which we perceive phenomena. Forms with which we are familiar suffer as we visually receive them in the most economic and efficient way possible. By rendering perceptually difficult forms and emphasizing the experience of form through the body's movement, my work revives the richness and vitality of common forms lost through over-familiarization.

Recognizing form as a catalyst for the free play of the imagination, my work is created with the intention of prolonging this play to the greatest possible extent. The foundation of my work is always a geometric constant inhabited by some sort of agent—a representation of the body or the body itself—that engages a form over a passage of time. While the form influences the agent's interaction with it, the agent still retains a freedom within the dictates of the structure. This freedom can yield unexpected results and demonstrate how our interaction with everyday forms can offer surprising depth if we are willing to grant them the time.

REID G. NORRIS
on Whitney Lorene Wood

To spend time among the cast of Whitney Lorene Wood's plastic theatre is to touch the absurd and to be touched by it. Her sculpted characters are often made from construction materials—like concrete or raw pine—and yet they exist just outside the territory of usefulness. Her piece *Like a Trophy* revels in this kind of contradiction. The hero (or heroine), a skinny gold lump, is installed in a fluorescent commercial space with gray-and-white tiled flooring. *S/he* is the only inhabitant. This is a quiet space, although the low-hanging lights and splashes of color are loud. Towering over the scene, an ordinary mop seems so strange.

Beside the hero is a fake landscaping rock and a vitrine holding a red velvetish pillow displaying nothing. A sad grandeur presides here, in the funny pride of these lowly objects placed low to the ground. There may have been joy, but the viewer has just missed it. These inanimate materials, cobbled together and spotlighted, pack so much comedy and loneliness. They become characters aware of their own wonderful uselessness. Misfit children from our world of planned obsolescence, they have been exiled to Wood's stages where absurdity, pity, and the possibility of happiness uneasily coexist.

In her drama are divas, prophets, fools, or some combination of the three. The hero of *Like a Trophy* is such an example, the lonely celebrant with a pointless body decked out in gold lamé. He seems to be a beginner, a stranger in this world of manufactured joy that, somehow, greatly resembles ours. In this character we can see our own vanity, our attempts at grace, and our sense of humor. Perhaps the message is "take your joy, manufactured or otherwise, wherever you can find it."

Because the machine won't stop. *Like a Trophy* knows this, and yet still performs our frail beauty, our silly sex. "You are the uninitiated," the hero declares, "and you arrive missing your instruction manual." Wood's cast of characters are profound not because they are lost souls, but because they have souls to lose. And lose and lose and lose.



Whitney Lorene Wood
Like a Trophy, 2012
Linoleum floor, metal and wood space frame
ceiling, fluorescent light, latex paint, and
mixed-media sculpture, dimensions variable



SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA12

WHITNEY LORENE WOOD



Andrew Woodard
Power Structure, 2012
Painted steel, solar cells, and
power inverter, 96 x 60 x 72"

My research and artistic production in the field of public sculpture have been influential in my decision to base my practice upon solution-driven tactics. Through embedding energy-producing devices in my work, I am invested in the creation of art that interfaces with the public both visually and pragmatically. My ideological basis stems firstly from an admission that our current way of life is unsustainable and has wrought devastating impact on our environment, culture, and communities.

Rather than attempting to simply take a critical, or scolding, stance to foster change, I have sought, through the symbolic and functional nature of solar cells, a type of engagement with the public that instead depicts a model for a better future. Solution-based, or "solutionist," thinking offers a way

to combat our cultural ills. Solutionist art acknowledges our problems, while at the same time poses—via interdisciplinary collaboration, forward-thinking methods, and innovative strategy—a positive, yet realistic outcome. More specifically, my work and research aspire to confront environmental issues, seeking new ways to link public art with clean energy production.

My work explores the self's vulnerability in relationship to representational systems of meaning. My work is not about the performance of multiple identities, but rather performing for the camera as a way of working through the multiplicity of meanings *within* identity. Within the images, performance occurs as a *reenactment* or *recalling*, repeated in order to work through identity via the imaginary space of the image—to reclaim identity, however temporarily or incompletely, through

a sublimatory visual language. My use of staged realism mines the relationship between representation and identity—paradoxically relying on the photograph to present the self within images that are bound only to the truths of their own fictions. My intent is to translate the unnamed space between reality and representation into a kind of poetic narrative, to use the devices of sublimation as a way of freeing identity from linearity and an indexical relationship to representation.



KELLY K. WRIGHT



Kelly K. Wright
Untitled, 2012
 Five archival digital
 inkjet prints,
 36 x 26" and 36 x 46"







CONTRIBUTORS

Ifeoma Ugonnwa Anyaeji, MFA Visual Art 2012, was born in Benin City, in the south-eastern part of Nigeria. She studied Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Benin, where she obtained a degree in Painting in 2005. In 2010 she was awarded a Ford Fellowship in support of her research on repurposing domestic waste materials (plastic bags and bottles) as a response to environmental problems in her home country.

JE Baker, MFA Visual Art 2012, grew up in rural Illinois on a horse farm as the daughter of an artist and an equine veterinarian. She received her BA in Fine Art and Psychology from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, where she was awarded the Peggy Condon Travel Award to support her research. Recent exhibitions include shows at the San Francisco Public Library and at The Kinsey Institute. More information is available at www.jebaker.com.

Natalie Baldeon, MFA Visual Art 2012, received her BFA in Painting in 2008 from the University of Central Florida and works in a variety of media, including painting, photography, and video. Her work investigates the complexities of contemporary gendered embodiment.

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Emily Hanson, PhD Art History & Archeology, just completed her master's thesis on Leonardo da Vinci's reputation as a sculptor, arguing that though his proposed equestrian monument was never completed and was logistically almost impossible, the sheer innovation of his design and his spectacular draftsmanship were instrumental in establishing his contemporary reputation. For her dissertation, she is interested in studying other proposed, audacious projects never completed in the Renaissance.

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Jieun Kim, MFA Visual Art 2012, specializes in painting and installation.

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Robert Long, MFA Visual Art 2012, specializes in mixed media, video, and installation. His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*, Inland Symposium, St. Louis; *Self, Observed*, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; and a solo exhibition *You Must Not Blame Me If I Do Not Talk To Clouds*, Satellite 66, San Francisco, CA.

Marie Bannerot McInerney, MFA Visual Art 2012, has a background in fiber and textiles and has worked as the head dyer/painter for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis costume shop for the last nine seasons, as well as designing and manufacturing sweaters for Skif International. Her most recent exhibitions include work in the 5th National Collegiate Handmade Paper Art Triennial in Washington, DC, which will travel to Rutgers in New Brunswick, NJ; CBAA BiblioTech in San Francisco, CA; and Dream Sequences Films at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis.

Nikki McMahan, MFA Visual Art 2012, received a BFA in Studio Arts at the University of Tennessee in her hometown of Knoxville, graduating with highest honors in 2010. Her interdisciplinary work, exhibited extensively in the South and most recently in the Midwest, employs painting, drawing, photography, performance, video, and installation to investigate the phenomenology arising from relationships of encounter.

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Whitney Lorene Wood, MFA Visual Art 2012, primarily works in installation and sculpture. In 2010, she graduated with a BFA in Painting and Art History from the Kansas City Art Institute.

Andrew Woodard, MFA Visual Art 2012, was born in 1980 in Iowa and completed his undergraduate studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD, in 2004. Woodard's work has been regionally as well as nationally shown, and was included in the Grand Rapids Art Museum's showing for Artprize, an international exhibition in 2011. His public sculptures are in various collections within the Midwest, with his most recent commission being a solar-powered sculpture for the Grove borough of St. Louis, 2012.

Kelly K. Wright, MFA Visual Art 2012, creates photography that explores the relationship between representation and the idea of self. Recent exhibitions include *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*, Inland Symposium, St. Louis.

Kathleen Perniciaro, MFA Visual Art 2012, was born in St. Louis and received an MA from Rhodes College in Memphis, TN. She has had solo exhibitions in Memphis and St. Louis. Cofounder and director of Open House Galleries, she is currently practicing in St. Louis.

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Emily Squires, MFA Visual Art 2012, was born and raised in St. Louis. She received a BFA in Printmaking and a BA in Education through the Arts from the University of Michigan. She has participated in workshops with the Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute, New Orleans, LA; the North House Folk School, Grand Marais, MN; the Center for Digital Storytelling, San Francisco, CA; and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, New Orleans, LA. More information can be found at www.emilysquires.com.

Nicholas Tamarkin, PhD Comparative Literature, holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His focus is dramatic literature.

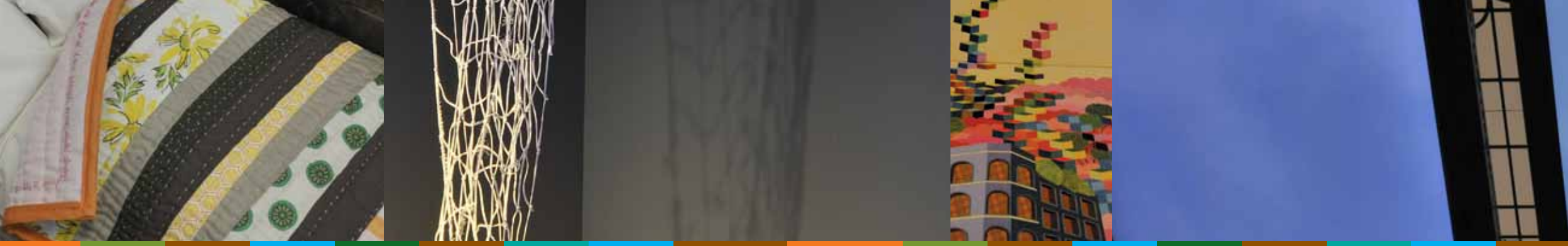
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Caitlin Tyler, MFA Creative Writing 2013, is from Nantucket Island, MA, and specializes in poetry.

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Elissa Yukiko Weichbrodt, PhD Art History & Archaeology, is currently writing her dissertation on corporeality, subjectivity, and empathy in contemporary art. She recently curated the exhibition *Transitional: Sculptures and Installations in Domestic Space* at Sixty-Six Twelve Arts Space, which included the work of several MFA alumni of the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts.

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SAM FOX SCHOOL OF DESIGN & VISUAL ARTS

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Today's vastly expanded context for art-making requires artists to understand various modes of critical analysis and strategies of production, distribution, and reception of creative work. The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts is an interdisciplinary and diverse community of architects, artists, and designers dedicated to excellence in learning, creative activity, research, and exhibition. The School's unique structure allows it to build on the strengths of each unit—Art, Architecture, and Museum—and to draw on the resources of Washington University.

As a result, students have access to expanded opportunities for critical dialogue and collaboration, and are singularly positioned to shape 21st-century culture through contributions to creative activity and research in design

and the visual arts. The Graduate School of Art encourages students to investigate the relationship between thinking and making throughout the program, and prepares them to incite progressive social change and assume their roles as global citizens.

As a collaborative project between the Graduate School of Art and the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, this publication presents twenty-four artists whose creative work thoughtfully confronts the challenges and optimistically engages the possibilities of our world.

This catalog was published in conjunction with the MFA 2012 exhibition at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, May 4–August 6, 2012.

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