




MFA
2010

SAM FOX SCHOOL OF DESIGN
& VISUAL ARTS



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FOREWORD


Buzz Spector

*Dean,
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It's a short list, really, the list of our expectations of matriculating students in the Graduate School of Art, but don't be fooled—it's not light. We ask every student to: 1) make your work; 2) engage in critical dialogue with peers and faculty, in which you: 3) learn to clearly articulate the terms of your artistic practice; 4) research and write a thesis statement; and 5) remake your work. There is also a set of allied duties and responsibilities, such as selflessness and curiosity, when working as a teaching assistant; attentiveness and concern for others, when managing the disposition of your things in public access areas or with regard to health and safety; and thoroughness, when dealing with the everyday administration connected to all institutional studies. Still, it's those items 1 through 5 that are the matter at hand.

In selecting these nineteen people from a substantial pool of applicants two years ago, we asserted our belief in their future potential as artists. From the connections we saw between the artwork in their portfolios and the terms of their statements of intent, we believed in their awareness of the conceptual bases of their studio practices. In this regard, even the form of their documentation contributed to our conviction that they each possessed appropriate understanding of how to represent their activities. We were pleased by the innovation we saw in their art, and by the expertise they demonstrated in its making. What was less evident to us until they arrived on campus was their capacity to contribute to rigorous critical discourse about art and ideas. While it is true that you don't need to go to graduate school to be an artist, the graduate experience sharpens one's critical faculties and builds understanding of the dialectical aspects of art-making in a way that is rarely grasped in the solitude of an individual studio. Some among this group could talk more effectively about their intentions when they first set up their studios, but now, as they prepare for the next phase of their lives as artists, we can say that they are all better at stating their aspirations for their art such that we recognize the connection between those words and what we see.

As you will have noted above, the "making" and "remaking" part in items 1 and 5 are essentially the same thing. Between those encouragements is the work of forging one's artistic sensibilities—a revisionary process central to all forms of creativity, whether emerging or advanced. We can't know whether the work these artists will be making in ten years will much resemble what you see in this exhibit and catalog. It is our hope that in ten years, and beyond, the powers of mind and heart strengthened here will continue to serve our graduates well in all their endeavors.



THINKING AS MAKING

Robert Gero

*Lecturer,
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The Master of Fine Arts program at the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, like the field of contemporary art production, has been evolving—a matrix of art practices morphing and warping across time in an exciting, volatile play of moves and countermoves. In addition to producing objects and events for aesthetic contemplation, contemporary art-making can be seen as the production of new forms or manipulations of the real to provide insight into human life. In other words, an art practice that not only foregrounds concepts but generates art from the world of ideas is a practice that presupposes that artists receive training in *thinking as making*, to develop as thinking makers. For this reason, the intersections between art and other academic disciplines, as well as the larger field of cultural, social, and political practices, become vital and significant.

Washington University is a tier-one research institution. In terms of a practical course of study for students of art, this translates into a rigorous studio practice in which technical proficiency, developed under active mentoring, is coupled with an emphasis on critical thinking. A range of seminars introduce the spectrum of theoretical, historical, and philosophical perspectives that forms the foundation for current art discourse, culminating in a graduate thesis seminar in which the students are guided through the thesis writing process.

A main objective of the MFA program is to champion the production of individual expression while expanding and deepening social perspectives—to challenge the conventional and habitual, and ultimately to give voice and material to new forms in thought and experience. Put another way, the goal is to develop thinking makers with real skills in creative practice, research, and critical reflection. This translates to an integrated studio practice where students learn to creatively and rigorously develop problem-solving skills that are adaptive and portable to any field. Our graduates are evidence of this.



A NEW SET OF CONVERSATIONS: ART AND THE CORRESPONDING EDUCATIONAL TURN

Patricia Olynyk

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

In a 2010 lecture entitled “Participation—A User’s Guide” at the Cooper Union School of Art, Irit Rogoff, theorist, art historian, and curator at Goldsmiths University of London, discussed the “participatory turn” in contemporary art and the subsequent blurring of lines between makers, viewers, objects, and spaces that has caused a shift in the relations between art and its meanings.¹

Art provides the opportunity to investigate ideas unframed from specific disciplinary and discursive contexts through visual or other sensory forms. If we move beyond the exuberance of the object and recognize its potential as a unique site of knowledge production, then we not only experience the image or the object, we also encounter what Rogoff refers to as “the drive of the artist.”

The artist crafts new contexts that generate an array of experiences in which the artwork functions as more than simply a curatorial object, but also as an occasion or event. Through these events, the viewer is “implicated,” according to Rogoff, in an “entanglement within a larger, complex narrative” in which viewers engage an endless multiplicity of connections and intertextual fields that shape their relationship to the subject of the work. There is no single underlying truth to be excavated. The viewer moves beyond the position of reactive viewing and what Rogoff refers to as “a singularity of judgment” to embrace a constellation of new exchanges and disturbances.

Similarly, a multiplicity of contexts for making and a corresponding richness of encounters are embedded in the Master of Fine Arts program in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts. In partnership with the larger University community, the program promotes both critical thinking and rigorous studio-based production, emphasizing the mutually cross-informed coevolution of the two. In shaping the work of emerging artists with broad differences in their backgrounds and orientations, the curriculum reflects the trends and strategic moves within the larger art world and supports a broad array of creative practices. No single production strategy, political perspective, or theoretical position defines the outcomes as students participate in various spheres of inquiry on campus and beyond. Some produce works that, according to French curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud in his seminal book *Relational Aesthetics*, assert the notion of “an independent and private symbolic space,” while others point to

¹ The lecture was held in the Rose Auditorium at the Cooper Union School of Art in New York City on March 8, 2010. Subsequent citations of Rogoff are from this lecture unless otherwise noted.

“a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art”—“an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context.”²

West Coast artist Allison Smith, one of the many distinguished visitors at the Sam Fox School, creates work that embodies this ethos. Her mixed media sculptures, photographs, installations, and performances both operate within the conventional framework of institutional discourse and engage in a rigorous examination of social systems. As the inaugural Henry L. and Natalie E. Freund Visiting Artist at the Sam Fox School this past academic year, Smith worked collaboratively with a team of graduate students to produce a large-scale exhibition of extraordinary replicas of European and American gas masks from World War I and World War II, exhibited at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. By employing low-tech production processes and a funky do-it-yourself aesthetic, these “twill and tape” reproductions activate a social dynamic one might associate with a quilting bee. Smith pokes a sardonic yet playful finger at gendered notions of craft while exploring constructions of personal and national identity through a series of staged photographs in which her subjects—students from the program—don her handcrafted replicas and engage in the process of historical reenactment. In the end, her installation, which includes accompanying historical documentation and conveys the economy of its labor, bears the evidence of the artist’s rigorous research-based process—a process that is enthusiastically embraced in the school’s own MFA program.

Similarly engaged in exhaustive research of his subjects, 2009–2010 Henry L. and Natalie E. Freund Teaching Fellow Bruce Yonemoto creates visually stunning and theoretically complex photographs, films, and videos that frequently investigate the role of visual culture in colonized and occupied non-Western cultures. One recent project entitled *Sacred Songs of Cusco* engages the Andean Peruvian culture through the recontextualization of lost Peruvian sacred songs. The resulting narrative explores the creation of the New Inca commencing with the then-recently developed indexing of culture through field research and its resulting effect on Peruvian national identity. In a separate installation of large-scale photographs at our Freund Fellowship partner institution, the Saint Louis Art Museum, Yonemoto portrayed young Vietnamese men in vintage or simulated vintage attire from the Vietnam War. This series presents a reenactment of Vietnamese soldiers in both South Vietnamese and Viet Cong uniforms, evoking memories of the American occupation. In this case, however, the artist captures his “performers” in the style of Renaissance paintings, invoking religion as the underlying premise of the war with Vietnam.

In both these series, the artist uses what Mary Louise Pratt calls “autoethnographic expression” to refer to circumstances by which colonized subjects represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own selective filters and discriminatory terms.³ This

² Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Paris: Les presses du réel, 2002), 14.

³ See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

unexpected reversal empowers the artist's subject and begs a contemporary look at history's peculiar representations and reframings. Like Smith's, Yonemoto's work engages cross-disciplinary discourse and a team of collaborators: in his case, historians, social scientists, anthropologists, cinematographers, theorists, and in the case of *Sacred Songs of Cusco*, librettists and an opera director. Both Yonemoto and Smith embrace creative research in their teaching as well as in their respective studios—research that typically challenges or complicates commonly held cultural or historical truths. Neither artist visualizes utopian realities, but rather they propose ways of rethinking the past while embracing the specificity of the present.

This contemporary strategy recalls Bourriaud's claim that the form of an artist's work cannot be reduced to the things that that artist produces: "it is not the simple secondary effects of a composition... but the principle acting as a trajectory evolving through signs, objects, forms, gestures.... The contemporary artwork's form is spreading out from its material form: it is a linking element, a principle of dynamic agglutination" that gets elements and experiences held apart to meet.⁴ Further, Bourriaud asserts that our visual experience has been complicated by the advent of cinematography and the introduction of the sequence shot as a new dynamic unity, enabling us to recognize as a world a collection of disparate elements.

Experimental cinema, new media, and digital culture in general have enriched the landscape of art-making and of art education. Some contemporary digital media works reference or spin off of former movements, while others break away from them completely. Though the computerization of culture in general has led to the emergence of new cultural forms, digital media in particular offers the artist its own unique set of aesthetic propositions. From these, new forms and research paradigms emerge which are ultimately modified or rejected by the upcoming generation of artists and cultural producers.

Digital sound and video, virtual environments, interactive installations involving human-computer interfaces, computer animation, and websites have long since entered the practice and parlance of studio-based work and art education. Tangible materials used in production are typically molded or assembled by hand in a determined sequence or arrangement, and their replicability arguably corresponds to what Lev Manovich, author of *The Language of New Media*, refers to as "the logic of industrial society."⁵ New media, however, is characterized by variability and represents a historical evolution that correlates not only to new advancements in postindustrial society but to new models of connectivity, agency, and progressive social change.

Many distinguished thinkers today are focused on the role of digital media in contemporary art and culture. Yet artists who work on the edges of technoculture understand that it forms something larger than itself and more than simply the aesthetic. This evolving territory focuses on the social and cultural dimensions of technology and consequently offers unique political and ethical perspectives of concern to art, science, and technological disciplines. Indeed, much

⁴ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 20–21.

⁵ See Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

of the contemporary discourse on digital technologies de-emphasizes its role as a driving force and claims that we are living in a post-digital era: a conceptual age when technology is fundamental to our understanding of many of the core ideas we hold about the physical world and about our status as humans.

A corresponding educational turn has emerged in several progressive programs in recent years.⁶ By nesting media, including digital media, under the umbrella of larger overarching concepts and ideas, these programs radically open up learning structures as they provide opportunities to build connective corridors between academic units for the purpose of promoting exchange and discourse across disciplines. As these connections are made, what I call new agnostic laboratories can emerge, serving not only artists, but individuals from all disciplines who are driven by the same sets of interests and concerns. This generative learning paradigm maps well onto the programs at Washington University as it transcends the model of the university as a regulated, prescribed space in favor of a site of new possibilities and potential.

Rogoff notes similar generative dialogic models among certain trends in the art world. "In the wake of Documenta X and Documenta XI, it became clear that one of the most significant contributions that the art world had made to the culture at large has been the emergence of a conversational mode.... [A] new set of conversations between artists, scientists, philosophers, critics, economists, architects, planners, and so on, came into being and engaged the issues of the day through a set of highly attenuated prisms.... And so the art world became the site of extensive talking—talking emerged as a practice, as a mode of gathering, as a way of getting access to some knowledge and to some questions, as networking and organizing and articulating some necessary questions."⁷

This coming together of individuals in a way that allows new conversations to emerge is as crucial as the content and the value of what is being said. Art that embraces this ethos both within academic institutions and outside of it is arguably at its best when it allows for both—when the singularity of ideas and interpretations opens up to a constellation of encounters that fuels the most radical and productive means by which to make art and advance culture.

The graduate art program at the Sam Fox School provides the setting for such a constellation, offering a robust, experimental environment rich in opportunities for emerging artists. The artist's studio functions as more than a site of making; instead, a network of serendipitous conversations, shared curiosities, unexpected passions, and new collectives emerge around the artist's subject. Here, students can extract vital principles gleaned through such experiences and apply them outside the academic sphere where they take new form. It is when these new forms are ultimately brought back into the learning environment that the program surpasses its more conventional function by providing a place for artists to engage ideas differently—ideas from outside its own walls.

⁶ One of the progenitors of the current evolution in art education was the Conceptual Information Arts program at San Francisco State, which launched in the 1970s.

⁷ Irit Rogoff, "Turning," *e-flux journal* (November 2008), www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18.



ASHBY BOS-WAHL COZZENS EARLY FABEL FULLERTON
 HASSAN HSU HUTCHINGS KANTROWITZ KEATY KORPELA LATERZA
 MOHRE MOORHEAD MUEHLKE RICHARDSON ROSS TROSCLAIR



SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010

MFA 2010 Thesis Exhibition
 Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum
 May 7 - July 26, 2010



My approach to art-making has evolved immensely from the time I was a teenage skateboarding punk rocker in the 1980s to my present participation in the digital media arts movement. I have used interactive graphic manipulated arts, printmaking, painting, and sculpture to express an underground, subversive point of view on capitalist society. Not every medium through which I have discharged these ideas has been a success, but I find that the more that I experiment and push an idea, the message will find its intended end result—reaching the masses.

Correspondingly, the decisions behind every move and mark that I make are always going to be questioned—and the expectations are even higher in grad school. For those of us who pursue an expanded academic art education it is most important to understand these expectations, and then to decide how to take accountability for what we make and do after graduating.

To this end, I feel that the role of today's artist is as important as, if different than, that of the common civil servant. It is still up to artists to intervene, to situate themselves in positions of resistance. New Media activism will continue to perform these interventions through public constructions of the visually unstable and resistant—in architecture, billboards, mock interactive digital viruses embedded within selected websites and forums, fake gossip magazines, propaganda materials, and mass media manifestos.

“ It is still up to artists to intervene, to situate themselves in positions of resistance. ”

Clyde Ashby
*Appropriated
 Re-simulated
 Media Constructed
 Identities*, 2010
 Video, 3 min.

CLYDE ASHBY



SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010

Aaron Bos-Wahl
Prayer, 2010
Mixed-media
installation,
113 x 94"



Art as a basic human cultural practice, in its greatest expression, takes as its subject matter the fundamentals of existence. Art is labor, utilizing the movement and grace of the artist's body in mindful, meditative work. My work is not engaged as much in self-expression as it is with social traditions. I endeavor to employ an art of sincerity. It is not an effort to mislead or belittle the viewer or sell a product. It is not an art of cynicism or sarcasm. Rather, it is an art that is affirming, respectful, and pragmatic.

My artistic practice is inherently a form of spiritual practice. This practice aims to sing the praises of nature—both human and non-human—to reveal relationships in nature and within oneself, to bring to light the interdependence of all living beings. Artists have a responsibility to create and undo harm. I see the artist as a kind of healer. My practice is articulated in the creation of objects in the studio, but also in collaboration with others to conceive of more immediate creative solutions to social and ecological injustices. This is a new mode of artistic practice—one in which divisions between artist and other are dismantled.





Sensual experience and memory are the integral parts of our inner clock that run in accordance with our physical impulses and innate flow of consciousness. As the viewer gazes upon a work, a story begins to evolve. What is this? Why is it here? Who made it? When was it made? How long will it last?

Our structures of time immediately figure, and to a degree, influence every decision that we as humans have made and will ever make. Our society is completely committed to a scheduled manner of perceiving progression. Time measurement originated as a means of tracking the sun and marking our place in the universe. However, adhering to these structures of time has become a burden to everyday experience, resulting in a conception of time as finite instead of continuous.

I want to provide a place for people to take a temporal break from the world. Art can be a means of creating a safe haven from this stranglehold we call time. Through my work I create phenomenologically inspired situations in which the exhibited occurrence

becomes a real experience rather than a measured interval of time. The presence of natural phenomena in areas of my work is a means of connecting our technologically accelerated life to the steady durations of nature that have, for the most part, held true since the beginning of mankind. This natural constant is the only true means of measuring time. Every schedule from our nine-to-five workday to those based on the four seasons are nothing more than a human construct; they don't really exist outside of our consciousness. They are simply the ways we label and divide. Accordingly, I strive to create events that disregard these classifications by simply allowing processes to unfold according to their own sensual characteristics.



At its core, my approach to art-making is similar to the stance of a child toward the world—one of curiosity and wonder. Is there a single square inch of this floor that has never been treaded upon? How much string would it take to float a balloon so high that I could no longer see it? What would it look like to catalogue the arm reach of everyone in the world? Simple questions like these form the basis for much of my work. The objective in pursuing them—as for the child who makes similar inquiries—is not to arrive at an answer per se, but to embark on an exploration simply for the sake of the exploration itself. Such wondering turns into a kind of directed *wandering* that leads to unforeseen discoveries.

Sir Isaac Newton wrote in a memoir, “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore...diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”¹ Newton’s thoughts not only describe the enjoyment, play, humility, and awe to which I aspire in my work, they also recognize the inexhaustible vastness of the world. For artists today, there is unprecedented access to knowledge in fields outside our own that can and should influence the ways in which we pursue our work and venture into the “great ocean” that lies before us. In my own practice, the fields of philosophy, theology, human geography, and architectural theory have greatly shaped my work and provided a new level of richness, depth, and contemporary relevance to my own wandering and wondering.

¹ Sir Isaac Newton, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton*, ed. David Brewster (Boston: Adamant Media Corporation, 2001).



John Early
*Untitled (Standing
 Snow Angel)*, 2010
 Graphite,
 dimensions
 variable



What is existence? What is death? What is one's place in this world? Seeking answers to questions that cannot be understood or determined by science alone is an important aspect to my creative practices. It may be that no matter how much we try, no matter how technologically advanced we become, we may never unravel certain mysteries. I feel as though these questions act as an equalizer in bridging gaps between all individuals.

The space between the unending number of locations and perspectives that make up much of humanity's presence in the world is in some sense related to the space that is found in language and communication. It is in this in-between space, these gaps in standardized communication and understanding, where there is potential for shifting perceptions and seeing different perspectives, by tapping into innate sensibilities that we all share. Though varied and different, there are similarities that tie and bond these experiences.

Working broadly within the realm of spatial practices, my projects focus on action and performance, installation and architecture. I am particularly interested in space as it is remembered, and in turn, its effect on perceived space. Through my research and work, I have found that physical and emotional commonalities linked to food, clothes, and shelter need structure to sustain life. Besides warmth, protection, and physical sustenance, we all need love, trust, security, and a space for the self, in one's own life and in society.

Ryan James Fabel
White Lodge
Black Lodge, 2010
Mixed-media
installation,
154 x 67 1/2 x 127"

“ What is existence? What is death? What is one's place in this world? Seeking answers to questions that cannot be understood or determined by science alone is an important aspect to my creative process. ”



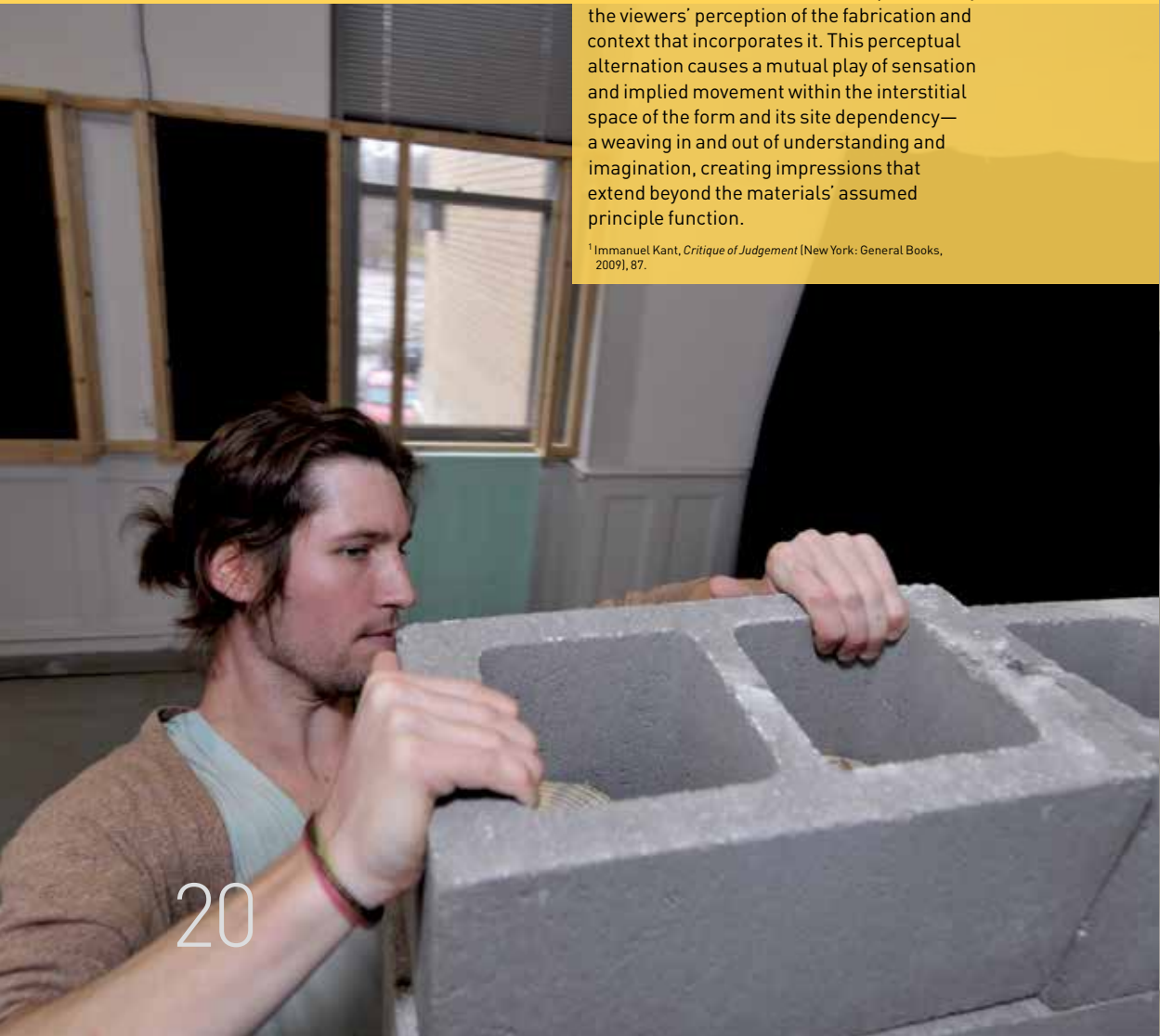
“When we compare our perception of an object with our conception of what it ought to be...we cannot help combining the idea at the same time with our feeling about it.”¹

My work is founded on an interest in materials—their assumed purpose, and the essence of what they represent. Through a reconsideration of these material resources, my intent is to both elevate and facilitate an intimate engagement that transcends their intrinsic, inbuilt purpose. It is this manipulation of the materials’ placement and purpose that facilitates real sensual understanding—negotiating a back and forth, a here-and-there movement, to make possible both what is and what can be.

Based on the quotidian nature of my resources, it is somewhat impossible to deny materials for what they really are. However, it is my intent to further meanings by negotiating a play between the material and its position in an underlying and applied structure.

The contextual relationship between fabricated form and architectural structure initiate a joint system of interaction. An inherent oscillation of form and structure is produced by the viewers’ perception of the fabrication and context that incorporates it. This perceptual alternation causes a mutual play of sensation and implied movement within the interstitial space of the form and its site dependency—a weaving in and out of understanding and imagination, creating impressions that extend beyond the materials’ assumed principle function.

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement* (New York: General Books, 2009), 87.



Joel Fullerton
Sometimes see the distance through, 2010
Mixed-media installation,
300 x 237 1/2 x 2”





My artwork is an attempt to reconfigure two social realities. I explore the unsettled intersections between my daily life in an American-Pakistani family and the culturally charged political, religious and social dimensions that define these turbulent times. In this way my art functions to shatter the distance between my home and other homes in distant places and address events that are both immediate and imponderable.

Currently my work deals with chaos. Chaos "may be understood not as an absolute disorder but rather as a plethora of orders, forms, wills—forces that cannot be distinguished or differentiated from each other, both matter and its conditions for being otherwise, both the actual and the virtual indistinguishably."¹ Following this understanding, my work hinges on fragments of reality, the disruption of lives, the inherent reconfigurations that occur and the plethora of energies that this process demands. These energies are simultaneously destructive and constructive; it is the potential energy generated by this contradiction that is the subject of my art. *Corner Joules* (2010) is an installation that flattens the energy of a curbside explosion much like the images in a newspaper; the event is muted and constrained, reduced to an angle, a sliver of reality, and a swath of materialized energy.

Materials are central to my process. *Corner Joules* is an accumulation of individualized pieces; silk remnants, wires, thread, and rebar steel are meshed to create a new localized formation. The gestural effect I employ is reminiscent of a Baroque understanding of dynamism and an Arte Povera utilization of materials. I move from sequences of stitched marks to the generalized assemblage to create a density of form. My work is focused on potential energies, a new territory for both the informed outsider and the responsible "half innocent," a space to explore a more intricately layered understanding of different realities.²

¹Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Chaos, Territory and Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia Press, 2008), 5.
²Ted Honderich, *Terrorism for Humanity: Inquiries in Political Philosophy* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 193.

“The contradictory relationship between the viewer and the viewed is established once the audience achieves self-realization of their dual role.”



Wenting Hsu
Yellow Seats, 2010
Inkjet print, 40 x 80"

WENTING HSU



The fixed role of spectatorship in traditional photography is questioned by digital photography. As a form of visual signification, photography can be comprehended in semiotic terms as part of a larger practice through which meaning is generated and conveyed. The signifiers are recognizable elements that connote specific content to viewers.

In the discourse of deconstructionism—the dialectic of presence and absence, or solid and void—the absence of the signifier also suggests to us its presence. Desire, voyeurism, fetishism, narcissism, masochism are all part of the unconscious drives that structure social relations through the gaze. The contradictory relationship between the viewer and the viewed is established once the audience achieves self-realization of their dual role.

This realization raises the issue of contemporary spectatorship; looking is about looking at others as much as being looked at. Using the tableau form, my work stresses the phenomenological aesthetics of the body and the affective engagement of the spectator. Through digitalization, the man-made construction is altered into an ideal visualization that challenges the depth of the visual plane. My large-scale photographs re-represent a large void space and present it to audiences so that it becomes part of the audience's environment.

John Nicholas Hutchings
To Breathe Knowing that I'm Here, 2010
Mixed-media installation: charcoal on paper, salt and wood, with dirt from studio floor and gold flakes, 180 x 168 x 120"



Heidegger writes, "A space is something that has been made room for—something with boundaries. A boundary is not that at which something stops but is that from which something begins its presence."¹

In my current body of work I am seeking to generate conscious awareness of presence within the aesthetic experience—an awareness of the tension between the object of perception, here defined as the artwork, and the conscious presence of the viewer.

Similar to haiku, I remove the superfluous elements within the work to speak in a more succinct and powerful voice, creating a space where the perceiver can be still and reflect on his or her presence in relation to the artwork. This voice is not an attempt to dictate what to believe but rather to stir the unique voice in the perceiver.



The process of this work traverses my faith in the manifest presence of God, and is an active exploration into being present in the spiritual and physical experience of making art. With each material and mark I seek to foster a relationship with my own presence within bounded space and translate that experience through the artwork. The materials I use, whether wood, charcoal, dirt, or gold, gather a trace of my own internal presence into the physical material, engendering a tension between the mediums.

The theory of emergence helps to illustrate the role of presence in my work. According to this theory, intelligence emerges from the connections between neurons: the individual neuron does not contain the thought, but rather the thought emerges in the spaces between the synapses of millions of neurons. Similarly, my artwork activates consciousness of presence by tethering different elements within the work to the presence of the viewer, creating a virtual space where the aesthetic experience can materialize.

¹ Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), 100–18.



I dress my voice in words.

Gaston Bachelard tells us that the joy of reading is a reflection of the joy of writing. He calls the reader the "writer's ghost."

I read writing by people trying to deal with loss that can't be reducibly dealt with. I'm wondering, who is the ghost in this continuum of speaking and listening, writing and reading?

I'm wondering how much my own desire for this material is driven, a decade after the American AIDS pandemic of the 1980s and 1990s, by an impulse to "read myself" into the role of the beneficiary of such eulogies, as both the lost and the grieving. As readers grant language power of emergence, so too do they grant themselves the same gift. Embracing the pathetic, humorous, and uncomfortable aspects of reading myself into existing texts, I no longer repress the desire to author these words. The content of my narration is very much a meditation on the process I undertook to write it.

At points this narration contends with itself through voicing emotions of doubt, disappointment, disgust, and anger. In other instances, it deals with its own narrative body with tenderness, forgiveness, humility, and hope. This varying voice both attests to and contests with expectations of singular authenticity in autobiographical storytelling. The voice's proposed intimacy and uniqueness turn fragile as its script and devices are exposed. Thus the work relies on eliciting a similar play between a sense of doubt and belief from you, its audience. My work is as serious as it is playful, and proceeds from a growing admiration for those who choose to make public their private loss.



“As readers grant language power of emergence, so too do they grant themselves the same gift.”

Dani Kantrowitz
Our Vanishing Wilderness, 2010
Video, 35 min.

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010



Larry Keaty
Patrick, 2010
 Mixed-media installation,
 dimensions variable



LARRY KEATY

The “Jizz Target” existed on all three bathroom stalls within the Club. When one sat down to take a shit within the fraternal order, they would find themselves staring directly at a hand-drawn target with the words “Jizz Target” written above it. To the side there was a set of handwritten instructions for its use. No one really knows who created the Jizz Target; however, it is clearly respected and of the utmost importance because it had been carefully retraced over the years. Surrounding the Jizz Target there existed other writings, many of which had faded over

time and others that had been covered over with new marks and writings. The Jizz Target, though, was unscathed. As a community, the kids had deemed it important. While no one knew who the mysterious person of its creation was, everyone respected him. In a way, his drawing made him legendary.¹

My current body of work deals with a set of personal experiences centered around adolescent boyhood. Of particular interest to me are the development of sexuality and the creation of myth. I build miniature models that depict fictionalized places of adolescent fraternal congregation—tree-house-like structures that represent a secret space hidden from girls and parents alike. In such a space, the rules are changed. There is a different set of expectations by which one is not only accepted, but also judged.

¹ Larry Keaty, “Notes from the Club,” unpublished journal.



Mamie Korpela
Light Switches, 2010
 Plastic and Lurecraft,
 3 x 4 1/2 x 1" each

the right object or material to start with. It may be the most mundane thing, like a light switch or a vintage scarf. It's a matter of turning and twisting until I can see something emerge. As materials and objects come together, I know I am onto something if it gives me a chuckle. In that case, it goes up on the wall or gets displayed in the studio where it waits for a reaction. If it manages to elicit a similar response from someone else, then I know it is an idea worth pursuing. At this point I have to step back and carefully analyze what possible meanings could be imbedded in the work or why it is working so successfully. Once I have a general sense of how to work, I go back to the materials to repeat the formula in order to fully realize the concept.

My practice begins when I am out and about. I enjoy collecting materials, even if I have no idea what I am going to do with them. My studio is bursting with all kinds of wacky colorful things. There are bins full of fabric, drawers overflowing with yarn, embroidery thread, rick rack and do-dads, pink rubber fishing worms, and stuff picked up from thrift stores. I like to come in and start rummaging around until I find something that piques my interest. Then I look at it and think, how can I tweak this or see it in another way? Sometimes when I have something that I want to address, I have to search through drawers and boxes to find



MAMIE KORPELA

“ At this point I have to step back and carefully analyze what possible meanings could be imbedded in the work or why it is working so successfully. ”

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010



As a foreigner to the US (though everybody feels foreign somewhere), I am concerned with the construction of subjectivity in a community that represents "the other" linguistically and culturally. I explore the desire for belonging, the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, the self-consciousness caused by the gaze of the other, and the need for recognition and contact. My work especially pursues those moments where the body of the filmmaker, unseen behind the camera, tunes in to the spaces and bodies that are in front of the camera, shortening the distance between viewer and viewed and reminding us of how human existence is intrinsically linked to sociality.

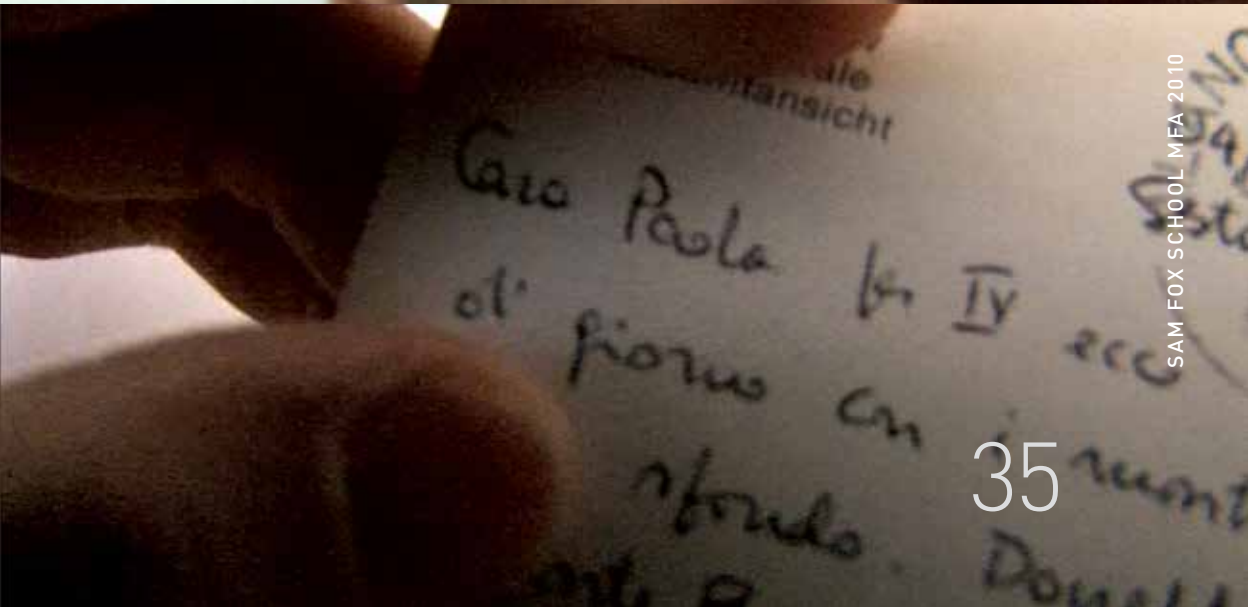
Public spaces, where we become more aware of the presence of the other, play an important role in my work. Trains, airplanes, the subway, a plaza—or even the entrance of an apartment building—are spaces where movement is dictated both by material structures and by invisible codes, but where it is also possible to glimpse bits of individual humanity.

In the digital era, we are able to travel with a camera as small as a cell phone, to capture images and sounds from any situation. We also have the option of editing this material into a constructed narrative, blurring the edges between documentary and fiction, reality and imagination. The potential is enormous. In my work I use high-definition digital technology as a method for long recordings and high storage capacity. Letting the camera run without time restrictions opens us up to the presence of the real, which includes the accident, the unstaged, and the unpredictable.



Paola Laterza
Nonresident Alien,
2010
Video, 22 min.

PAOLA LATERZA



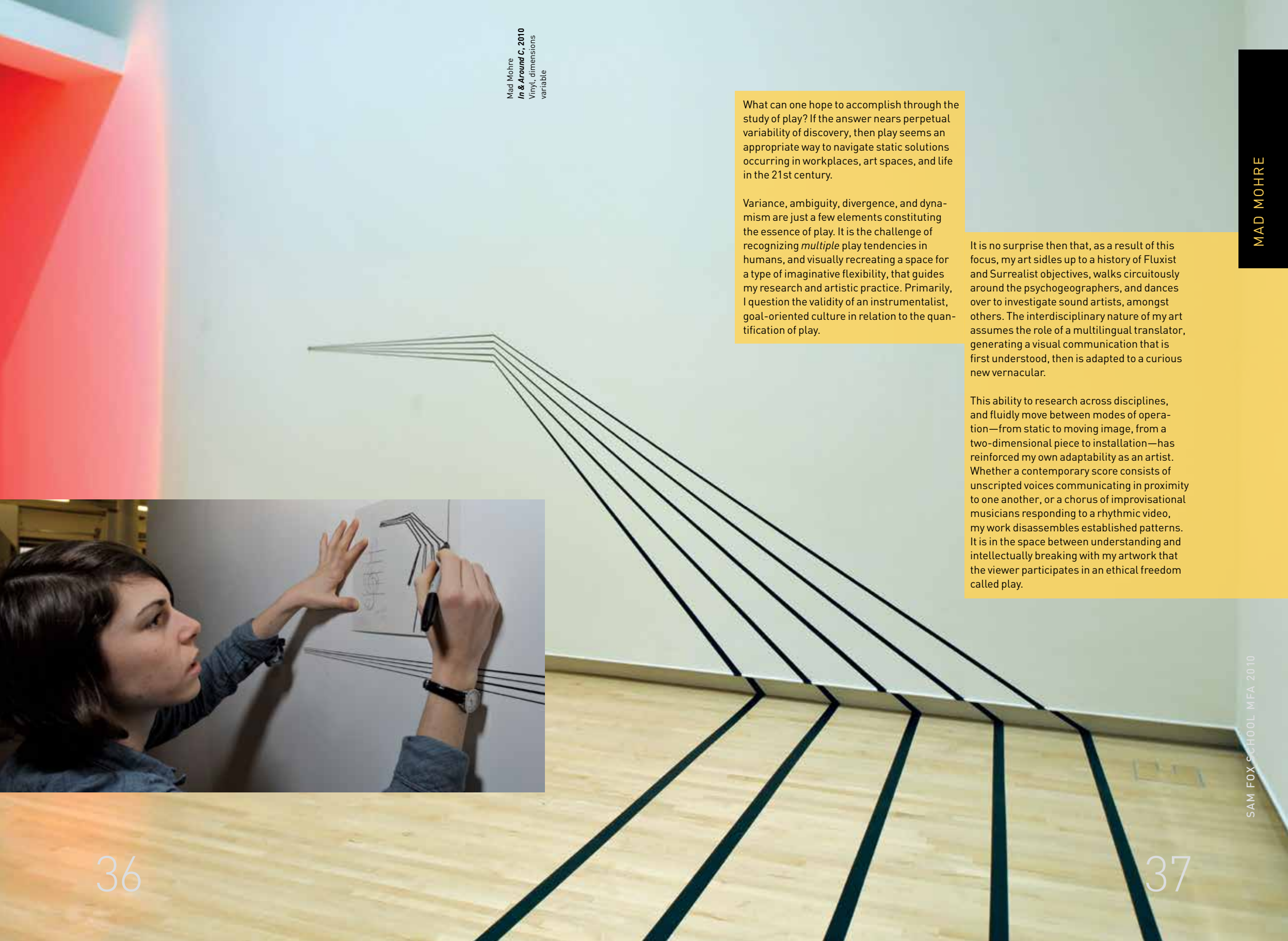
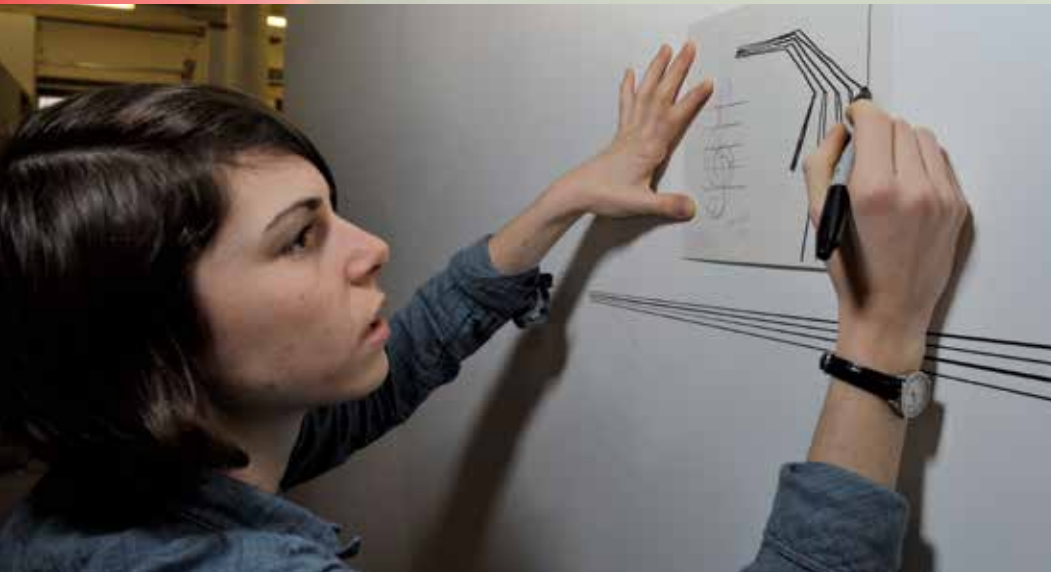
SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010

What can one hope to accomplish through the study of play? If the answer nears perpetual variability of discovery, then play seems an appropriate way to navigate static solutions occurring in workplaces, art spaces, and life in the 21st century.

Variance, ambiguity, divergence, and dynamism are just a few elements constituting the essence of play. It is the challenge of recognizing *multiple* play tendencies in humans, and visually recreating a space for a type of imaginative flexibility, that guides my research and artistic practice. Primarily, I question the validity of an instrumentalist, goal-oriented culture in relation to the quantification of play.

It is no surprise then that, as a result of this focus, my art sidles up to a history of Fluxist and Surrealist objectives, walks circuitously around the psychogeographers, and dances over to investigate sound artists, amongst others. The interdisciplinary nature of my art assumes the role of a multilingual translator, generating a visual communication that is first understood, then is adapted to a curious new vernacular.

This ability to research across disciplines, and fluidly move between modes of operation—from static to moving image, from a two-dimensional piece to installation—has reinforced my own adaptability as an artist. Whether a contemporary score consists of unscripted voices communicating in proximity to one another, or a chorus of improvisational musicians responding to a rhythmic video, my work disassembles established patterns. It is in the space between understanding and intellectually breaking with my artwork that the viewer participates in an ethical freedom called play.





“ These ephemeral, time-based works reject capitalistic goals, while unifying viewers with found objects and imagery. ”

EMILY MOORHEAD

dominance; in order to understand our individual identities, we must also understand what the contributing factors to those selves are.

My work visualizes these interpretation systems, yet ultimately seeks a more honest description of the world. Each artwork illustrates a portrait of the viewer wherein her or his inner identity shifts in degrees of consciousness and subjectivity. These ephemeral, time-based works reject capitalistic goals, while unifying viewers with found objects and imagery. The work informs viewers with systems for interpreting culture, but ultimately allows them to critique the constructed reality for themselves.

As an artist I feel it is my ethical mandate to provide a service to the public. I am interested in making work that not only benefits myself but connects to our collective selves in an effort to reconfigure given truths, create conversations, and generate empathy. In this vein, I am concerned with the intertwining of media culture, capitalism, and viewer participation. Similar to a sociologist, I critically analyze popular culture, political activities, and my immediate community for source material. Equipping myself with multiple systems of analysis such as Marxism, feminism, and poststructuralism, my work prepares me to fully investigate the complications of social identity.

Analyzing the consumer relationship between the American family and popular media, I recognize modes of control, repression, pleasure, and satisfaction that are grounded in entertainment. The audience is brought to identify with popular programming characters through camera angles, lighting, and emotional soundtracks—all which direct viewers to empathize with the archetypal role of heroes, victims, and even murderers. Viewership entails the transfer of power between individuals with agency and media



Emily Moorhead
Meyer-Hardwick Special
Collections: *The Tree of
Knowledge of Good
and Evil*, 2010
Mixed-media installation,
dimensions variable

SAM FOX SCHOOL MFA 2010



Jonathan Muehlke
Underwater Peach Blossom Valley, 2010
Oil with nails, plastic ruler,
charcoal, thumbtacks, and paper
on canvas, 91 x 180"

My practice of painting acts as a small door that provides a brief peek into the overwhelmingly large and long history of art. Sometimes this practice is related to the production, contemplation, or interpretation of an image, object, or text; sometimes it is about a long pilgrimage into a familiarly "unknown territory;" sometimes it is about realizing the generosity of teachers, friends, and family, boatmen along the way; sometimes it is simply appreciating the greens, reds, oranges, and browns in autumn.

I came into this program with a lot of questions. "How is culture constructed?" "What is progress?" "What is learning?" "What is history?" "What is creativity?" and "How can I think outside the box even more?" My stubborn belief that I could draw an encyclopedia in three seconds, a dictionary in two, and the "Truth of Everything" as a single dot in less than one (on a scratch of Starbucks napkin) has sustained me through graduate school. These exercises gave me some kind of faith in the power that images hold within a world dominated by the overwhelming presence of language—the power of imagery to describe the world, as we see from artists like Monet, Shi Tao, Picasso, Qi Bai Shi, and Brueghel the Elder, to only name a very few.

What are we to make of this? We can despair in it, or celebrate and have fun with it. Confucius said that those who have fun learning are always better off than those who are good at learning. Perhaps this is what Picasso meant when he said, "It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child."



Jessa Richardson
Krampus, 2010
 Tattoo ink, graphite, and
 watercolor on paper, 14 x 17"
Deer, 2010
 Tattoo ink, graphite, and
 watercolor on paper,
 22 1/4 x 22 1/4"
Child, 2010
 Tattoo ink, china marker, and
 graphite on paper, 22 x 22"



Jessa Richardson
Untitled, 2010
 Tattoo ink, china marker, and
 graphite on paper, 50 x 72"

In this age of visual communication, traditional methods of art-making are often regarded as unnecessary. I would agree that, yes, the representation of the figure made with human hand-eye coordination can be replicated by computers. But it is not the same. The difference is the experience—the human experience of creating something in one’s own image, with one’s own hands. This is an important experience for the artist; however, it still has little impact on culture as a whole.

So why do it? How can the drawn figure impact people on an equally significant level—or can it at all? Does it need to? In my work, I focus internally. I take what has been, historically, a male form of expression and claim it as a woman. I take the female body and draw it from the perspective of the female gaze.

The resulting representation has little attachment to time or place. It is simply about being a woman. Self-discovery. Anxiety and insecurities. I draw the woman as a primal figure—somewhat awake, somewhat asleep, part functioning “human,” part animal. This is where I feel I am in my personal life, and it is the moment I choose to represent. By reclaiming the female image, I am reclaiming part of myself. I draw and paint the figure in a transitional period, a moment of becoming. But more significantly, in the act of creating I myself am becoming.

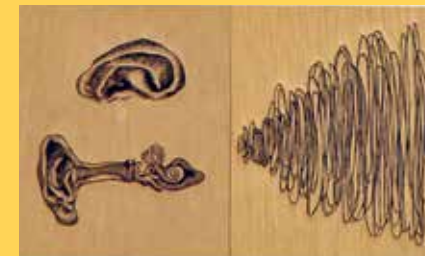
“ In this age of visual communication, traditional methods of art-making are often regarded as unnecessary. ”



As an artist, I am interested in how humans perceive the world, as I believe that our understandings *are* inseparable from the body and its senses. In my work, I aim to explore this idea through the use of print-based imagery in a variety of media, including the artist book, installation, and video. The images that make up my work represent cognitive, behavioral, and aural interpretations of my personal relations with the world.

Materials and tactile thinking are essential components to my art practice. As the mind and body are unified in physical and intellectual exploration, experiencing the labor-intensive processes of printing by hand and the tedium of bookbinding coincides with my interests in the exploration of perception.

The artist's book, in its many forms, can be viewed as an intimate object that metaphorically implies the unfolding or leafing through



of thoughts within the mind and processes within the body. In this context, images interact directly, through both active and stationary means, prompting the viewer to create their own internal narratives, while considering the figurative elements of each page.

Expanding the notion of the interactive art experience, I have moved these images away from the intimacy of the page into visually and physically stimulating installations and video. Repetition of image and cyclical movement are at the core of these environments. The accumulation of layered imagery and the potential of the multiple are applied to these structures, allowing me to further investigate ideas surrounding externalized stimulation and its effects on the internal cognitive construct.



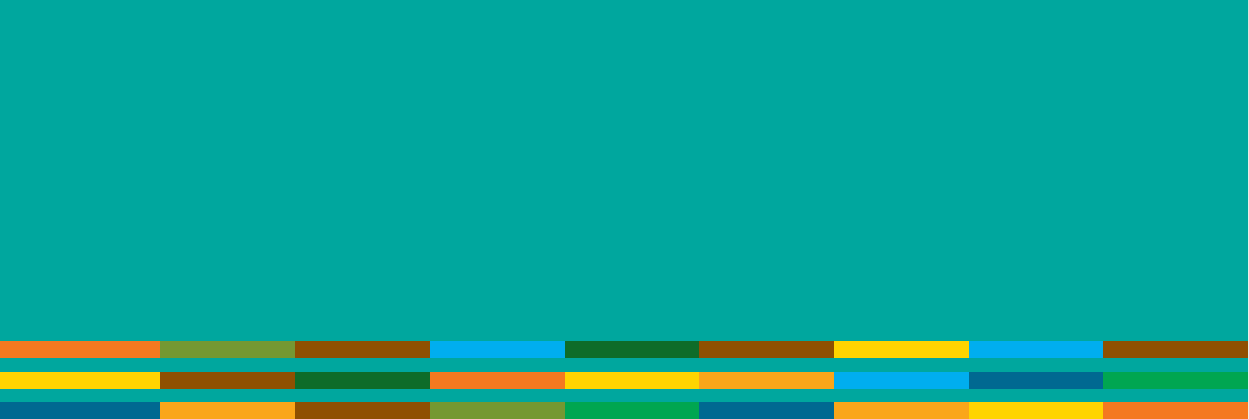
I am interested in exploring the permeable boundaries of our constructed reality. By presenting the opportunity to reconsider the way we perceive our built environments, I create an experience that is based on the primacy of embodied perception over intellectualization. The body is the primary means with which we engage in the world. The spaces we interact with daily affect our experiences and as a result are a part of our being. If we consider the built environment as an extension of our bodies, what would that image materialize as?

By altering the physical and sensorial properties of interior spaces, my work is constructed to create cracks in the psyche of the habitual and the known. Through the manipulation

and recreation of given architectural spaces, I create new realities that sensitize our physical experience. Responding to the form of immersive environments, viewers are engaged as they move in conjunction with and in reaction to the created surroundings.

Other important facets of my work include light, color, movement, surface, texture, and material. The importance of fabric as my primary medium lies in its sensual surface, haptic quality, and dual fragility and strength. In its layered and translucent form, fabric acts as a metaphor for skin, both architectural and bodily, that functions as an additional layer of ourselves and the spaces we encounter.

Carlie Trosclair
intra, 2010
Mixed-media
installation,
252 x 360 x 72"



SAM FOX SCHOOL OF DESIGN & VISUAL ARTS

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE	GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & URBAN DESIGN	COLLEGE OF ART	GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ART	MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM
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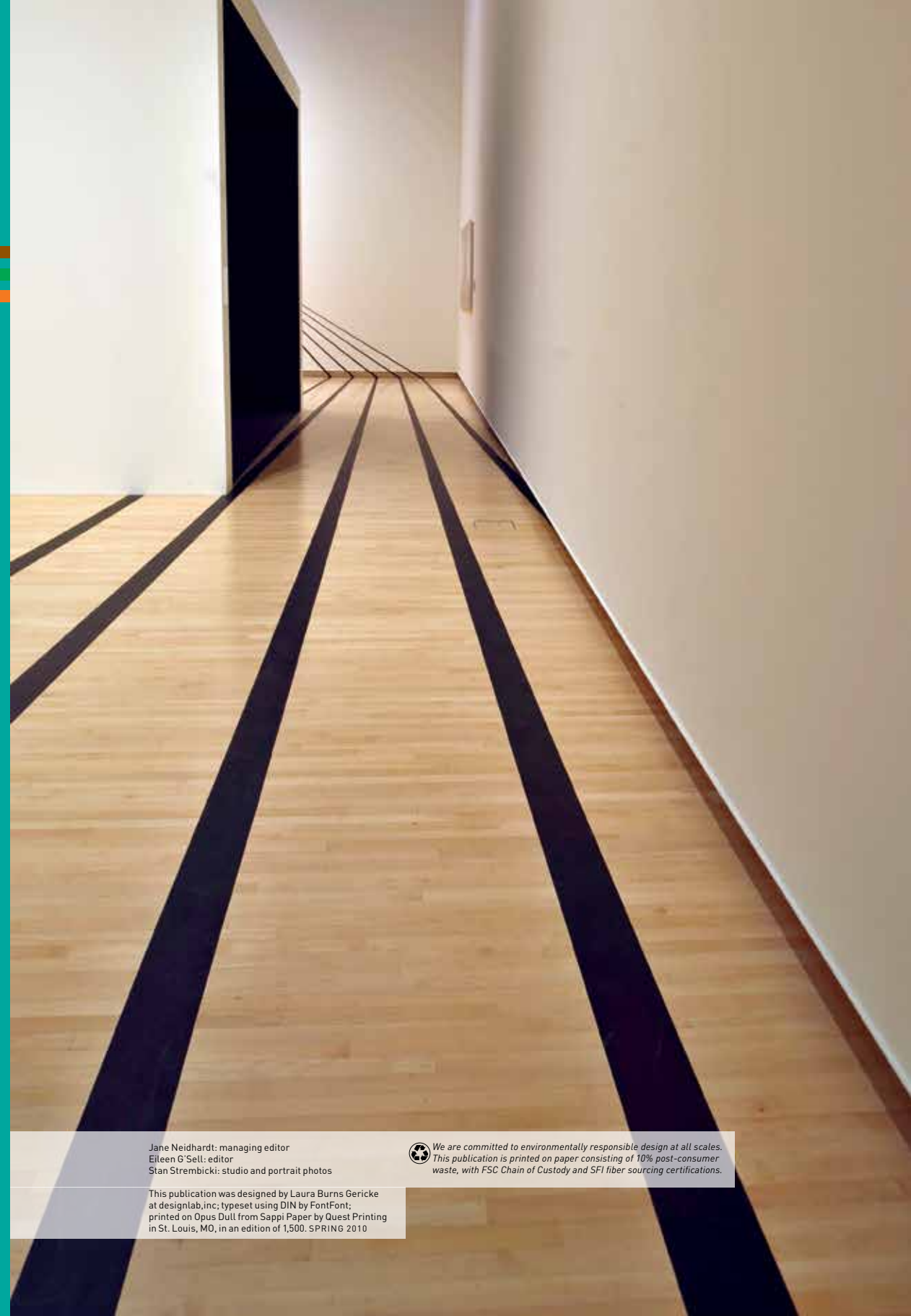
Today's vastly expanded context for art-making requires artists to understand various modes of critical analysis and strategies of production, distribution, and reception of creative work. The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts is an interdisciplinary and diverse community of architects, artists, 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 nineteen artists whose creative work thoughtfully confronts the challenges and optimistically engages the possibilities of our world.

MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM



Jane Neidhardt: managing editor
Eileen G'Sell: editor
Stan Strembecki: studio and portrait photos

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