



2008 HOUSTON AREA EXHIBITION



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Blaffer Gallery
The Art Museum of the University of Houston

Claudia Schmuckli

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Seth Alverson: p. 9; William Betts: p. 11; Sasha Dela: p. 13; Jonathan Durham: p. 15 top; Dana Harper: p. 17 top; Eric Hester: p. 15 bottom, p. 27 bottom, p. 37 top and bottom right; Hana Hillerova and Dana Harper: p. 17 bottom; Hedwige Jacobs: p. 19; Andres Janacua: p. 21; LAXART: p. 37 bottom left; Jonathan Leach: p. 27 top; Peter Lynde: p. 23; Lynne McCabe: p. 29; Ariane Roesch: p. 31; Julie Spielman: p. 33; Gabriela Trzebinski: p. 35; Rick Wells, p. 25.

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Claudia Schmuckli, Curator

PREFACE

The **2008 Houston Area Exhibition** marks the tenth installment of what has become an important tradition at Blaffer Gallery, the Art Museum of the University of Houston. Held every four years, this survey exhibition provides a critical overview of artistic activity in Houston and thus reflects changing issues and concerns in the cultural community. As the curator of this year's edition, I am very pleased to present the finalists culled from a process that began with an open call yielding 350 submissions, continued with fifty studio visits, and ended with the selection of sixteen artists for inclusion in the exhibition.

As in past presentations, the show introduces artists who are young or new to the Houston community, but it also offers more seasoned artists the opportunity to develop new work for this occasion and to be seen in a fresh light. The issues explored in the works in the exhibition are as varied as the media each artist uses, but what connects all of them is an active engagement with ideas and concerns that define life—be it that of an individual, a society, or a nation—in this particular moment. I hope that the Houston community will share my enthusiasm for the art and artists in this exhibition. We are proud to support and celebrate their presence among us.

Claudia Schmuckli, Curator

SETH ALVERSON

Images of an open coffin and an empty room hover as pictures within a picture in *Life and Death in the Alps* (2007), giving this seemingly innocuous vista of a beautiful mountain valley an unexpected symbolic charge. Like windows into a different dimension, the floating ovals disturb the idyllic scenery of receding peaks and winding creeks, where a snowy winter slowly gives way to the budding greens of spring. The coffin leaves no doubt that death loomed large in the artist's imagination. If, by contrast, the interior was meant to represent life, it is an empty one indeed, with nothing in it to hold our attention or to stimulate our imagination. In its cushioned comfort, death seems to offer greater promise than the hollow room of life.

By using a majestic alpine landscape as a backdrop for the contemplation of matters of life and death, Alverson consciously invokes the romantic tradition. Just as romantic painters used minuscule figures before the dramatic foil of a wilderness landscape to represent the individual's ultimate insignificance within the glorious whole of God's creation, Alverson's medallion images introduce doubt about the meaning of existence and remind us of our finality. If the room symbolizes our home in life, and the coffin, our resting place in death, the awe-inspiring mountain valley represents the final vessel for our fading lives: the earthly realm to which we ultimately return as insentient matter.

Life and Death in the Alps was painted around the same time as *Untitled* (2007). Its idyllic, if melancholy, quiet stands in harsh contrast to the violence portrayed in the latter, where bloody splatter surrounds two corpses in the entryway of a house. We have no indication as to the identity of the victims or the circumstances that led to their death. Here, too, an oval image introduces additional layers of meaning. We see a house from the outside—maybe it is the same building, only seen from a distance—set against a blood-red sky, and we can't help but feel that murder is in the air.

Parlor 1, *Parlor 2*, and *Casket* (all 2008) are the latest in a series of works that grew out of *Life and Death in the Alps*. Instead of offering sweeping, if oblique and inconclusive, narratives inspired by found images, the isolated funereal images here read like single declarative statements that accrue meaning only through their contextualization within the series of works. Made while Alverson contemplated application to graduate school, these works serve as metaphors for his doubts about academia as a valid institution for the generation of ideas. The symbolic declaration of academia's death, however, is also the recognition of a loss: as with any death, those who remain behind are left with a vacuum impossible to fill. Alverson nonetheless decided to go ahead and pursue a degree within the context of the institution about which he has such ambiguous feelings. For someone who sees great vitality, beauty, and mystery in death, maybe such a decision should not come as a surprise.



Top:
Death and Life in the Alps,
2007. Oil on canvas,
60 x 84 inches
(152.4 x 213.4 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom left:
Parlor 1, 2008.
Oil on canvas,
32 x 26½ inches
(81.3 x 67.3 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom right:
Parlor 2, 2008.
Oil on canvas,
32 x 29½ inches
(81.3 x 74.9 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

WILLIAM BETTS

William Betts developed his reputation as an artist by using digital technology to produce paintings that are as exacting as they are compelling. Building on previous careers in the natural gas, real estate, and software industries, Betts planned his late entry into the art world with a keen sense for business and sought success through the strategic melding of creative ingenuity and marketing. Although he went to art school in the early nineties, Betts's official debut as a professional artist only dates back to 2003, but he launched his new venture with the determination and skill of an experienced entrepreneur sure of his talents.

Interested in what he terms the "elasticity" of digital images, which can be sliced or stretched without any loss of information—a discovery he made while playing around with digital technology in 1996—he set out to devise a system that would allow him to exploit that potential and translate it into painting. The solution was a computer-controlled industrial machine that moves up, down, and along rails attached to a table, and comes to a halt, following the artist's commands. The machine is controlled by custom-made software that allows for minute manipulation of the process. Between adjusting the settings of the computer program, and monitoring the progress and quality of the paint application, Betts takes up to two weeks to complete a painting. Unlike other artists of his generation who have incorporated painting machines into their work to signal a critical or ironic engagement with the history of the medium and the role of

the artist, Betts embraces the machine as the only tool that will produce the aesthetic and quantitative results he desires. It is an open secret kept where it belongs: in the studio. For his first series of work, Betts took one pixel's worth of information from a photograph, broke it down into its individual color components, and translated them into vibrant compositions of crisp parallel lines of color. Continuing his experiment with lines in the *Moire* series, Betts layered sets of lines that differed in angle, spacing, and width into dazzling, shimmering patterns. For the *Random Color Square* series, he replaced lines with dots, but the resulting patterns are equally complex and visually confounding.

With his *Surveillance* and *Traffic Cameras* series, Betts entered different territory. Instead of condensing concrete information into retina-challenging abstract compositions, he reproduced imagery captured on surveillance cameras and traffic cams using dots that mimic the pixilated nature of his source images. Although less mysterious than the artist's abstract compositions, they have one thing in common with the other series: an interest in what is ordinarily unseen. Betts draws such elements out for public consumption, be it the colorful reality and composition of a pixel or, in this case, a kind of surveillance imagery that is not readily available. Betts avoids overt sensationalism—we don't witness crimes or accidents. But the very mundanity of the scenes serves as a reminder that the promise of security offered by surveillance technology also comes at the price of privacy.



Top:
I-10 and Los Mochis, EL Paso, Texas, May 31, 2007, 6:09 pm, 2008.
Acrylic on canvas, 54 x 72 inches (137.2 x 182.9 cm).
Courtesy Devin Borden
Hiram Butler Gallery.

Bottom:
US 54 Hondo Pass, EL Paso, Texas, November 15, 2006, 6:12 pm, 2008.
Acrylic on canvas, 54 x 72 inches (137.2 x 182.9 cm).
Courtesy Devin Borden
Hiram Butler Gallery.

SASHA DELA

Sasha Dela's objects and installations, assembled from found recyclable materials, address the problematic intersection of politics, ecology, and economics where we play a role as the cause of global degradation as well as the ineffective source of a possible solution. Shelves filled with empty boxes that once contained electronic stereo equipment and books composed of advertising from automobile dealers, drugstores, or mail order catalogues bound inside the covers of ecological treatises showcase the waste trail of our indulgence in luxury goods. Through the simple acts of collecting, repackaging, and recontextualizing, Dela creates awareness of the flip side of consumerism. In a way, she simply states the obvious. In Dela's view, we are all part of an undeviating trajectory driven by a global economy of consumption with irreversible ecological consequences. Rarely, however, do her works take an overtly moralizing stance. They certainly refrain from offering advice on, or solutions for, the management of a worldwide environmental crisis. She seeks neither to accuse nor confront; her appeal to action, if one can even call it that, is more subtle, as if she is trying to woo us into taking a second look at the conditions of our lives. If there is any reformative impulse driving Dela's practice, it is directed to the creation of awareness.

Her work in photography and video offers another example of heightening consciousness: by restaging the common experience of travel, be it by car or plane, she reveals our inadvertent complicity with industries whose geopolitics, while widely criticized as accelerating the world's ecological decline, are fundamental for modern-day mobility. The

deliberate banality of her photographic and filmic images of highways and waterways reflects our complacent acceptance of the status quo, all the while subtly appealing to a greater individual responsibility. In Dela's *Water Shelve* (2008)—a shelf unit stacked with plastic water bottles containing a black liquid—oil has replaced the water. This simple gesture speaks volumes on an economic indebtedness to fossil fuels so great that ecological concerns are commonly shelved and shoved to the side.

Pillar (2008) is an extension of a piece Dela first realized in the parking lot of DiverseWorks Art Space, inspired by the sparkly tinsel streamers decorating the sales lots of automobile dealers, serving the dual function of attracting buyers and protecting the merchandise from birds. A ubiquitous and defining element of suburbia's visual makeup, the tinsel also signals sprawling Houston's dependency on the automobile for transport and on the energy industry for economic opportunity.

Dela has compared her process to the technique of "reflection" practiced in psychotherapy where the interpretative repetition of a patient's thinking process, feelings, and concerns is used to invite thoughtful reconsideration and self-examination that may translate into change. Dela's objects, installations, photographs, and films prompt a similar reconsideration. Dela disavows any romantic belief in the transformative power of art, but by assuming the role of intelligent mirror to the consequences of contemporary existence, she may be more of an active agent of change than her work at first glance might have us believe.



Top:
Research photo for *Pillar*,
2008. Digital photograph,
dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
*Black Water Bench and
Volumes*, 2006.
Bench, bottles, water, books
and advertisements, ink,
aluminum shelves,
60 x 162 x 12 inches
(152.4 x 411.5 x 30.5 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

JONATHAN DURHAM

In Jonathan Durham's work, elements of personal history and cultural legacy are conjoined in an ongoing examination of the definition of self, both as an individual and as a member of a culture or society. The video *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime...* (2008) draws its title from the first (and as a result most famous) Canadian carol to enter the hymnbooks of both the Anglican Church of Canada and the Methodist Church. Originally written by Father Jean Brébeuf, a French Jesuit missionary who was sent to live with the Canadian Huron tribe in 1625, it was composed in the native idiom and is said to have entered the tribe's oral tradition long before its translation into English.

Durham shot his video of a choir soloist performing this hymn in two modes: one using the church's stationary cameras and another using a camera mounted on a remote-controlled toy helicopter swirling around the singer as she moved down the aisle. The grainy and unstable images captured by the helicopter are starkly different from the highly polished and choreographed imagery of the on-site cameras. Where the latter speaks to the formal celebratory aura of the hymn in the here and now, the former suggests the less than glorious circumstances of the composer's death: Father Brébeuf was brutally tortured and murdered in 1649 when the Iroquois wiped out the French mission and drove the Hurons from their homeland. In its role as a war machine, the helicopter represents the swirl of threat and anxiety that encompassed the missionaries' and Native Americans' lives, where fear of death by the hand of the "other" was pervasive even in more peaceful times.

Durham's sculptures reflect some of the same uneasy cultural collisions while addressing issues closer to home.

Blending aspects of the artist's family history and traditions with defining moments of his adolescence, they are mementos of a more personal nature. *There's a Beggar in Them Woods* (2008), with its torn upholstery and tobacco-covered collection basket, links childhood memories of Durham crawling under the church pews, while listening to his organist father practice, with his grandfather's "sacrifice" for his family by taking seasonal jobs as a tobacco farmer and land surveyor. *For Head High and Glassy* (2008), Durham covered a surfboard with tobacco and equipped it with a suspension device made of survey chains, tying memories of his first surfing lessons in Palos Verdes, where the water is thick with waving seaweed, to a family history defined by another form of weed. The surfing reference reappears in *There's a Beggar in Them Woods* where the armrests have been altered to hold a surfboard. On the other hand, the physical alterations to the bench also bespeak acts of destruction—an association enhanced by the eerie presence of an amputated foot and chain that refer back to the violent history of the establishment of Christian faith in Ontario that is at the center of *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime...*

Through continued examination of the personal and cultural markers specific to his Protestant upbringing and ocean-side coming of age, Durham encourages a similar engagement on the part of the viewer. In a climate of uncritical subscription to national values that conflate the secular and religious, Durham's work promotes a stance of enlightened self-scrutiny.



'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime..., 2008. Still from color video with sound TRT, 7 min. Soloist: Carrie Lelsz. Organist: Dr. Rhonda Furr. Audio/Video Engineer: Karl Van Kyle. Camera Operators: Lisa Hogan, Michael Harada, and Jonathan Durham. Courtesy the artist.

There's a Beggar in Them Woods, 2008. Reconstituted church pew, men's loafers, cast plastic, tobacco, epoxy, foam, paint, mirrored tin, 87 x 30 x 41 inches (221 x 76.2 x 104.1 cm). Courtesy the artist.

HANA HILLEROVA

Assembled from readily available industrial materials such as wood, glass, or mirror, Hana Hillerova's sculptures are conceived as thought devices with which to manage the increasing complexities of life in the digital information age. While the roughly hewn wooden structures are mostly modular and floor bound, those made out of glass tubes are crystalline in character and tend to be suspended from the ceiling, as if representing two different modes of thought: one rational, giving primacy to concrete matter; the other spiritual, privileging the flights of imagination. The solid, grounded reality of the spray painted wood and the airborne lightness and translucency of the glass engage in a dialectical dialogue that forms the basis for Hillerova's most recent "thought forms."

Made of precisely cut, glued, and threaded strips of mirror, these sculptures offer great variety in their degree of formal density, ranging from a single prism to multilayered structures that grow in many directions. Whether suspended from the ceiling or attached to the floor, they appear to float in space, defying any notion of mass and weight. They also deny the laborious nature of their construction: no matter their individual scale or structural complexity, they all appear to fade into a realm of non-objecthood where, instead of claiming their place, they give space to our imagination. Born out of a desire to imbue matter with energy, Hillerova's mirror sculptures are active and responsive agents of space.

Through the refraction of light and the reflection of their surroundings, they register and impart every change in atmosphere, while at the same time offering a contained place for quiet contemplation.

Hillerova's mixed-media collages, on the other hand, recall an earlier interest in the conflation of virtual and actual realities, explored in installations that translated computer-generated or manipulated imagery into actual physical environments. Creating spatial images by combining drawing and collage with digitally produced imagery, Hillerova locates the contemporary experience at a point hovering between physical reality and cyberspace where the two have become indistinguishable. The collages and environments—and partly the wood structures as well—embrace and reflect the mental noise caused by the seemingly limitless creative possibilities of digital technology. In contrast, Hillerova's glass and mirror sculptures seek to counter that chaotic multiplicity of stimuli with a structural clarity and material transcendence that allows for focus and repose. Conceived as environmental "antidotes," they are physical vehicles for the regeneration of thought. Tools in the artist's personal quest for a material manifestation of spirituality, these sculptures also articulate for Hillerova the possibility of transfiguration—or simply the successful reconciliation of outer and inner lives, and the needs and demands of our body, mind, and soul.



Top:
"Transfigurations," installation
view, Lawndale Art Center,
Houston, 2008.

Bottom left:
Sketch for a sculpture (converging perspectives), 2008.
Mixed-media collage,
12 x 19 inches
(30.5 x 48.3 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom right:
Sketch for a sculpture (skycube), 2008.
Mixed-media collage,
12 x 19 inches
(30.5 x 48.3 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

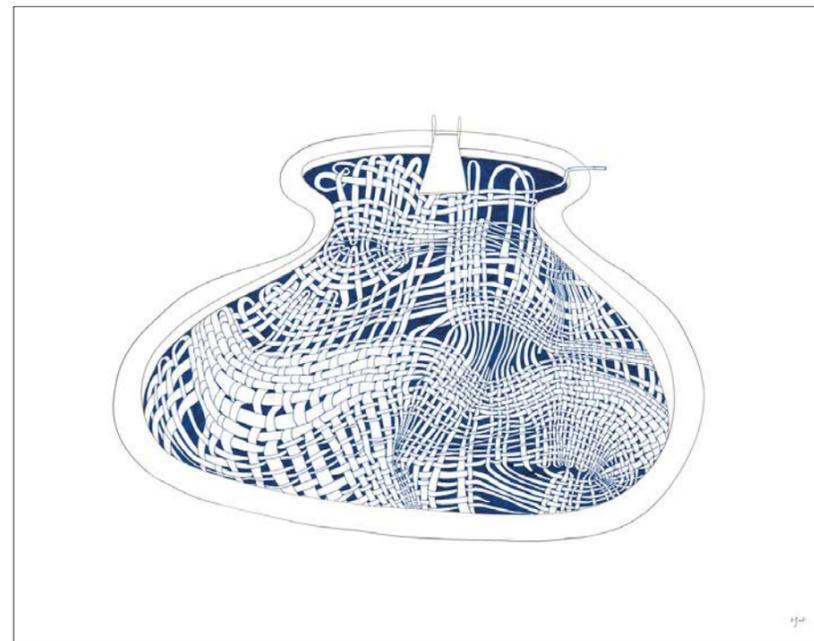
HEDWIGE JACOBS

Hedwige Jacobs's drawings and animations pull the viewer into a world full of lived experiences. Charting life in all its mundane twists and turns, the drawings in particular offer a visual stream of consciousness without beginning or end. Jacobs describes them as "diary drawings" that mark moments past, present, and future. Continuously mining her ever-growing memory bank of images, Jacobs establishes connections between different points in time, portraying moments replete with symbolism yet open to interpretation. Jacobs views life's journey as a series of interdependent choices that define our path and determine our future. Through repetition and variation of certain recurring motifs that have, over the years, become part of a personal visual "alphabet," Jacobs's drawings reveal an intertwined continuum of events and images. Figures in crowds or isolated silhouettes embedded in fields of color, houses, pools, greens, and webbing and networks of all kinds make up Jacobs's basic repertoire.

At first glance, her tightly focused images appear simple, but Jacobs's economy of means is deceptive. Concentrating on one or two compositional elements at a time, each drawing offers a poignant illustration of a psychologically charged situation involving people, places, or things that examines an individual's relationship to and place in society. In *Gossip* (2008), for example, figure after figure comes tumbling out of the mouths of two talking heads, then slides

down a set of concentric circles to gather in a pile of bodies at the bottom. It perfectly captures the potentially harmful effects of sensationalistic gossip. Reminiscent of audio waves, the circular collars vividly symbolize the ever wider dissemination of rumors, while at the same time serving as a landing pad for those trammelled reputations. *Duplex* (2008) presents the shared housing unit as a forced solution, with one house drawn out of the other to the detriment of both. Made of seemingly elastic netting, their surfaces are stretched to the point where structural solidity is undermined. *Exit* (2008) is a study in failed crowd management and behavior, while the dense underwater web in *Open Pool* (2008) makes us wonder what lies beneath the surface of this seemingly innocuous image. Jacobs's drawings invite a second look or, in her words, open themselves to a "second impression."

Setting the stage for the contemplation of social and spatial relationships, the drawings encourage the projection of personal associations relating to the viewer's own experience or interpretation of similar phenomena. Jacobs's animations add further layers of visual information and potential meaning in their demonstration of how to read individual images. Like a storyboard of her obsessions, each drawing carries within it the potential for its open-ended narratives to be animated, if not by the artist, then by our own imaginings.



Top:
Gossip, 2008.
Pencil and marker on paper,
19 x 24 inches (48.3 x 61 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Open Pool, 2008.
Pencil and marker on paper,
19 x 24 inches (48.3 x 61 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

ANDRES JANACUA

Andy Janacua harbors a profound desire to understand the present through the lens of the past. In revisiting, redefining, and recontextualizing monuments and symbols of modernity, he seeks to question and broaden common understandings of history and create awareness of our conditioning by them. But alongside this conscious engagement with iconic images of modern culture, he also looks for whimsical elements in found materials or situations that tell the stories of people and cultures in more serendipitous terms. In his work institutional and emotional languages co-exist in a parallel examination of our shared constructs.

Bird in Hand (for a new colonial theory) (2008) is a compilation of forty slides, distributed over forty spacers in the projector carousel, that show Janacua holding a canary in his hands, sometimes gripping it firmly, sometimes caressing it lightly, sometimes prompting it to spread its wings or fly away, then again trying to contain it when it attempts to do so. Projected in quick succession and with calculated jumps and gaps, the slides portray the ambivalent relationship between captor and captive, and the subtle shifts in hierarchy that occur in the bird's struggle for freedom from the artist who is trying to seduce it into wanting to stay. An apt metaphor for any power struggle, *Bird in Hand* is also ultimately frustrating in its insistence on maintaining the conflict instead of resolving it in favor of one or the other. However, in the context of life, the refusal to supply a resolution rings truer than any happy or, depending on the perspective, unhappy ending ever could have. It is also much

more poetic. The subtitle adds a political dimension that is not otherwise readily apparent. Originally imported to the Americas from Spain, the canary represents the invading forces of the conquistadors, paradoxically reduced to a captive in the struggle between colonial influence and indigenous peoples. This suggests it is not anger over the subjugation of one culture by another that motivates Janacua's colonial reference, but rather an interest in the nuances of cultural infiltration as a seemingly natural result of any nation's political desire to increase its sphere of influence.

Of Mexican descent, Janacua queries the historical development of his cultural identity and its effect on modern-day Latinos, not in order to condemn it, but to better understand it. The colonial era referred to in the subtitle is part of a distant memory. The artist seeks to mimic the dynamics of remembrance through the piece's presentation as a slide show. Janacua compares the slight retinal "burn" experienced as the eye adjusts to changing light conditions with each new slide to the fading in and out of darkness of memories: some events are bright and clear, while others slip out of reach, their power or futility contingent on time and context. Just as the bird won't succumb to the will of the artist, our memories can't be conjured up by force. But even this unreliable and subjective evocation of the past can heighten our understanding of our future, as individuals or as a society.



Top:
Bird in Hand (for a new colonial theory), 2008.
35mm slide, 1 of 40 in a projection series.
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom :
Untitled, 2006. C-print,
24 x 28 inches (61 x 71.1 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

NICOLAS KERSULIS

Nicholas Kersulis's work grows out of a critical engagement with art history as a discipline of classification based on media and style. Challenging the characteristic distinctions between architecture, drawing, painting, sculpture, or photography through an interdisciplinary practice that confounds such categorizations, he raises questions about the meaning of representation.

Circular Panels (Row D) (2006) perfectly exemplifies this multilayered approach: constructed as a freestanding wall, it combines painterly, sculptural, and photographic elements. Placed at a diagonal, the work initially defies a view of either side of the wall or the objects mounted on it. Only by walking around it, do we realize that the two sides are painted in different colors: the white side features the eleven circular panels of the title and the gray side their square photographic reproductions. Both are mounted in the same order, so that the circumnavigating viewer, depending on which side of the wall she chooses to look at first, experiences the painted panels or their photographic reproductions in the same visual sequence. Kersulis painted the thin, Plexiglas discs in a circular motion. Visually stringing the center of each disc along a horizontal axis, he applied layer after layer of gesso onto the panels until each mark became "a frozen residue of motion and gesture, a quick, keen, easily read depiction of movement." Through continued layering and repetition, the expressive quality of each gesture diminished in a process of self-erasure that negates any authenticity the hand-drawn mark might carry. The photographs, by contrast, are mounted on thick Plexiglas and

take on a material quality that competes with the painted discs. Just as the circular panels themselves seemingly undermine their own authenticity with respect to the painted mark, the photographs encourage that association through their careful revelation of lines and texture, which appear more alive in the reproduction than in the actual paintings. Photographed against a gray background, the structure of each painted panel emerges in the photographs with a crisp clarity unique to the medium of photography.

In his ongoing series *Rocks* (2008), Kersulis again uses gesso to blur the line between disciplines, in this case painting and sculpture. Taking stones as his point of departure, "the most basic sculptural form found in nature," Kersulis covered one side of each rock with layers of paint, until the buildup of gesso equaled the rock in thickness. In their final form, these painted rocks conflate not only notions of painting and sculpture, but also ideas of nature and culture. While the titles of individual stones reference the places from which the artist gathered them, thus emphasizing a natural origin—California, New York, Illinois, or Texas—their presentation firmly places them in the cultural realm and within an aesthetic dialogue revolving around the sculpture-base relationship. Using a sturdy table as their base, Kersulis has highlighted this appropriation, at the same time reminding us that art has always looked toward nature for inspiration. By letting his brush strokes be defined by the shape of the stone's surface, Kersulis questions the notion of truth or meaning in nature and culture, life and art.



Top:
Circular Panels (Row D),
2006. Wood, sheetrock,
Plexiglas, C-Prints, Cornforth
White dead flat oil paint,
acrylic polymer gesso,
96 x 156 inches
(243.8 x 396.2 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Rocks, 2008. Rocks, acrylic
polymer gesso, Cornforth
White dead flat oil paint, table,
variable dimensions.
Courtesy the artist.

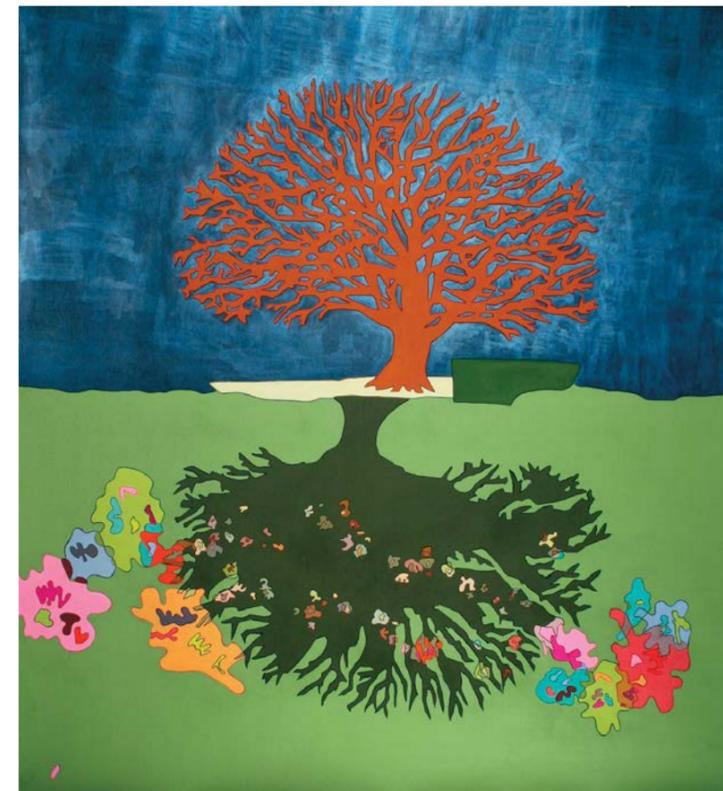
MINDY KOBER

Mindy Kober's ongoing series of gouaches entitled *50 States* (2007–08) is a humorous riff on the 50 States Quarters Program launched by the United States Mint in 1999 to foster a new generation of coin collectors. Appropriating the individual designs on the backs of the quarter coins that represent each state's unique history, traditions, and symbols, Kober has created luscious compositions spiked with her own wry commentary on the populist imagery. In *Connecticut* (2007), for example, the image of the Charter Oak appears twice, as a barren tree standing naked against a blue sky and as its shadowy underground mirror image sprouting bubbles of colorful blooms. Legend has it that the oak tree served as a hiding place for the colony's original charter when King James II consolidated several colonies into the Dominion of New England in 1687. Although it remains unclear whether it was the original charter or a parchment copy that was cached in the cavity of the tree, the Charter Oak plays an important role in the legendary origins of the state. Kober's double image playfully engages the debate as to the nature of the surviving document while also alluding to the fact that tales about the Charter Oak continue to blossom vigorously long after the actual tree died in 1856.

In *Virginia* (2007), Kober has surrounded the three ships that carried the settlers dispatched by the Virginia Company in 1607 with wildly curling waves of green, blue, and yellow

that threaten to engulf the fleet on its way to the New World. While the cluster of mounting waves emphasizes the danger of travel across the sea, the work also comments on the conquering nature of the settlers' mission. By marking their sails with a skull and crossbones, Kober turned the settlers into pirates on a violent quest to plunder someone else's riches. The piracy theme extends to the sailboats that represent *Florida* (2007) as well, along with its palm trees and space shuttles. Here, too, the allusion to colonial conquest casts Florida's settlement as an illegitimate invasion of a world belonging to others. Yet, while these works certainly question the heroism and rightfulness of the colonizers' claims to the states they occupied, Kober's bold and jubilant graphic language introduces a quality of the fantastic and the fictional, a context where romanticism ultimately triumphs over any form of revisionist history or cultural critique.

Freely tapping a variety of graphic styles including illustration, calligraphy, cartoons, anime, and advertisement, Kober has translated her motifs into images that exist purely on the surface. Even if she manipulates them to add layers of meaning, she never does so at the expense of visual clarity or for the sake of greater illusionary depth. Her images are superficial in the best of ways: direct, poignant, and ravishingly beautiful.



Top, left:
Vermont, 2008.
Gouache and gold leaf
on paper,
45 x 33 inches
(114.3 x 83.8 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Top, right:
Virginia, 2007.
Gouache on paper,
44½ x 34 inches
(113 x 86.4 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom, left:
Connecticut, 2007.
Gouache and ink on paper,
49 x 45 inches
(124.5 x 114.3 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

JONATHAN LEACH

Jonathan Leach paints the American landscape as an endlessly expanding commercial zone defined by highways, strip malls, parking lots, food courts, high-rises, telephone poles, and tinsel streamers. While occasionally seduced by the particularly reflective façade of a glitzy office building, he has a pronounced fondness for the outer boroughs and the generic, run-of-the-mill industrial developments multiplying along major thoroughways all over the country.

Over the years, Leach has studied the phenomenon of urban sprawl and its aesthetic effect in a number of cities and states, having moved from Lexington, Kentucky, to Chicago, then to Portland, Oregon, to Minneapolis, and now to Houston. He has developed a pragmatic and uncritical relationship to the commercial and industrial entities that populate his paintings. For him they are simply a by-product of the American lifestyle that defines the look and feel of our urban landscape today. "I'm not saying that these places are good or bad," he says. "In terms of my art, I don't look at it as a moral question." Indeed, when we look at his painting, it becomes apparent that the questions he is asking concern aesthetics rather than ethics.

Although there is a certain homogeneity to the places that attract him—he clearly seeks out a particular type of environment wherever he lives—Leach's paintings are deeply influenced by the individual nature of the architecture and socioeconomic dynamics of each city. Especially when seen in series, they are clearly identifiable with a specific metropolitan context. Leach often revisits places in his memory even when he has long since moved to another city. So it is

important to note that his paintings are in keeping with his memory and not with his real time residence. He has lived in Houston for nearly a year, but most of his images are still concerned with the lingering impressions of the cities he left behind. *Reconstruction* (2007), for example, recalls a building in Minneapolis, whose gridded façade of shifting planes serves as a backdrop for the close-up image of a high-security fence line spanning the surface of the painting. Lines of color delineate paths within the grid of the façade, connecting squares of different colors and angles. Like circuit drawings, they establish relationships between various planes and surfaces.

In fact, many of Leach's paintings read like circuit drawings or directional diagrams, alluding to the fact that traffic, actual or digital, dominates most of our contemporary experience of place and time. *Untitled* (2008) is more anecdotal in nature. Recalling the convergence of a highway crossing, strip mall, and water tower, it is composed of mostly diagonal intersecting lines, planes, and colors. Here, as in other paintings inspired by his time in Portland, Leach has incorporated tinsel streamers into the design, adding a playful dimension to an otherwise highly constructed image. Using colorful linear grids, often with steep perspectival elements, Leach establishes a formal matrix that captures the geometry and energy of the urban landscape and translates them into vibrant compositions. Working exclusively from memory, he distills his impressions of specific places into dynamic images that bridge the gap between abstraction and representation.



Top:
Reconstruction, 2008.
Acrylic on canvas,
47 x 46 inches
(119.4 x 116.8 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Untitled, 2008.
Acrylic on canvas,
88 x 78 inches
(223.5 x 198.1 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

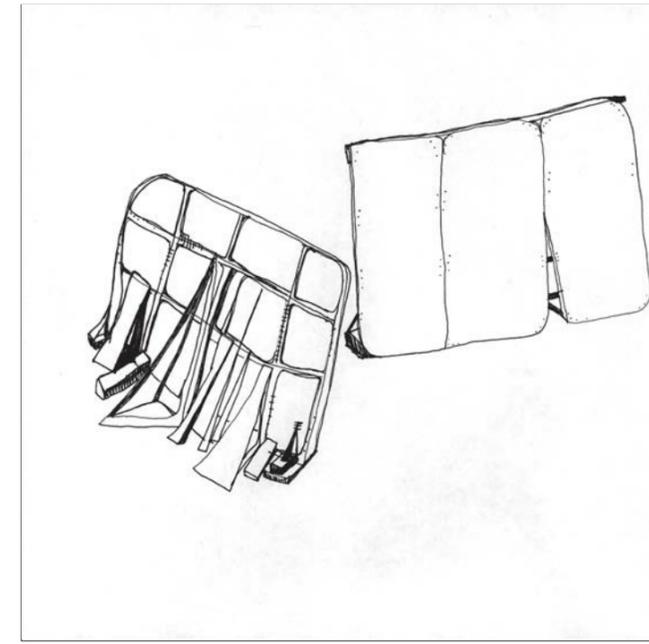
LYNNE MCCABE

Lynne McCabe's project for Blaffer Gallery, *Building walls together* (2008), investigates the delicate balance between social integration and artistic exploitation in community-oriented practices. It is part of an ongoing research project that explores and critiques "relational aesthetics," a term coined by French curator Nicolas Bourriaud in his 1996 book of the same title, which defines relational art as an intersubjective encounter between the viewer and the object where meaning is created collectively by the artist and the audience—in either the actual (or hypothetical) production or the reception of a work of art. Rather than an authoritative object that sprang from the imagination of an individual, the artwork in relational aesthetics is conceived as the product of a community effort taking place in the real world of social interaction. McCabe is deeply skeptical of the claims to democracy and inclusiveness made by the theorists and practitioners of relational aesthetics. After all, it is still the artist who dictates the terms of the engagement. Despite the fact that social situations always imply a certain loss of control on the part of the artist due to the unpredictability of the participants' reactions, this is nonetheless a calculated and ultimately desirable loss meant to inform the work within carefully defined parameters. Rather than negating the artist's authority over the public involved in the making of relational art, McCabe focuses on the dynamics of collaboration in different social contexts.

For *Building a platform to support my weight* (2008), for example, McCabe sent out a call to fellow artists soliciting

their thoughts on how such a project should be undertaken. McCabe then proceeded to build a series of platforms following the instructions each artist sent, an exercise invariably compromised by a lack of information or expertise on both sides. Presenting a video of her failed construction attempts alongside the ephemera of her written exchanges with her partners, McCabe showcased her own doubts about the possibility of, and value in, successfully marrying two artists' visions in one project. What remains are the relics of a crumbled collaboration.

In *Building walls together*, the artist has opted to manipulate socially held notions of authority and trust. Composed of photographs of children holding construction tools, copies of correspondence with their parents, and a poorly built wall on the verge of collapse, *Building walls together* is as confrontational as it is educational. In creating the appearance of having employed children to build a wall in the gallery space, McCabe's work initially provokes dismay about her use of kids as physical laborers in a decidedly child-unfriendly endeavor. Only on closer inspection do we realize that the children's involvement was benign and age appropriate. They took part in an educational workshop with the artist, at the end of which they posed with the tools in a fun exercise supervised by their parents. The moral and ethical confusion about the nature of the children's participation in the making of the piece raises questions about the definition of legitimate boundaries in the broader context of participatory art.



Build a platform to support everything
You hold, dear.
Ease yourself beneath it.



Top:
Sketch for *Building walls together*, 2008.
Pen on paper,
10 x 10 inches
(25.4 x 25.4 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Instructions for social sculpture, 2008.
Relief print, 10 x 10 inches
(25.4 x 25.4 cm).
Edition 1 of 5.
Courtesy the artist.

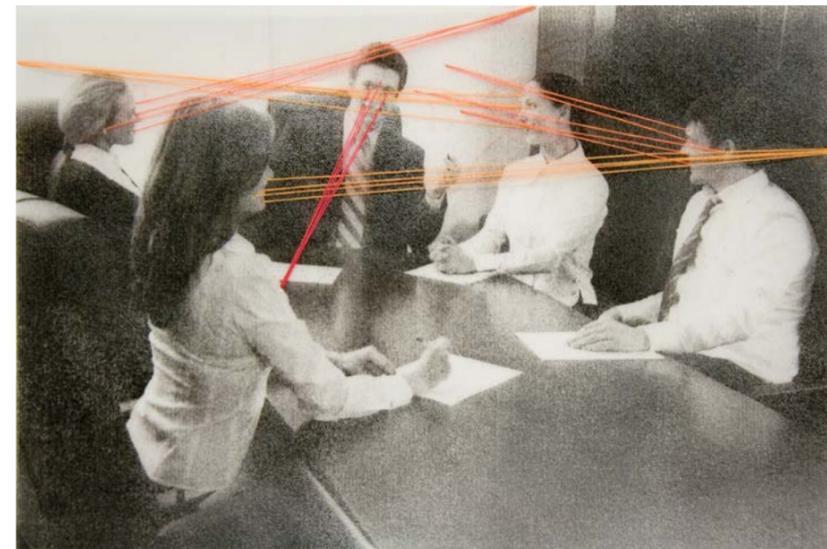
ARIANE ROESCH

Ariane Roesch's work examines the quality of communication in the digital age. Incorporating personal and found photography with other materials like thread or wire, she establishes connections between seemingly unrelated elements within an image or among a series of images to create narratives where none previously existed. Utilizing a needle or a drill, she pierces the photographs to "stitch" together the points of interest. This unusual form of embroidery, inspired by the feminist embrace of needlework in art since the late seventies, adds textural qualities to her work that take it out of the realm of the purely photographic (or even two-dimensional) and into that of sculpture and installation. The photographs are either placed inside a frame without glass, leaving the strings to spill out of the frame, or mounted on wood or Plexiglas with wire as the connecting thread.

In the series *Essential Connections* (2007), Roesch contrasted human interaction with the relations between man and machine. While the former always involves an element of immediacy in the form of touch, she defines the latter as one of distance, primarily negotiated through sight. In this context, touch is merely a means of operation, a functional necessity, and not the direct expression of emotional states such as anger, joy, or affection. In her *Conference* series (also 2007), Roesch shifted her focus to the dynamics of the modern workplace, where physical gatherings of

people are increasingly limited to business meetings dictated by goal-oriented agendas. The darting sightlines that Roesch has drawn among the attendees of the various meetings throughout the series reestablish connectivity, while at the same time questioning the efficacy of this work model. They also hint at less overt activities during such work sessions: thoughts trail off, glances are stolen, and bodies and clothes are assessed surreptitiously. With minimal means, Roesch has managed to restore a humorous and human dimension to these otherwise cool, formalized encounters.

For her installation *Zusammenbruch* (*Breakdown*) at Blaffer Gallery, Roesch portrays the exchange of information in the workplace as a circuit drawing that envelops technologically connected yet ultimately isolated individuals. In the work, a group of Bavarian musicians introduces the possibility of fostering community through electronically shared interests or cultural heritage (Roesch is German), but the music they feed down wires into a fax machine remains unheard because of a failed connection: instead of being transmitted, the ear-seeking tunes spill into the void, as if to emphasize the impossibility of tangible relations in a technology-dominated environment. By calling into question the value of technology and showing its infiltration into our daily lives, *Zusammenbruch* encourages us to investigate and redefine the physical and psychological spaces in which we live.



Top:
Under the Hood: 22, 2006.
Ultra chrome inkjet print on
wood with red electrical wire,
24 x 5.5 x 8 inches
(61 x 14 x 20.3 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Office:conference 4
(*passions fly high*), 2007.
Xerox print on vellum with
colored thread, 5 x 7 inches
(12.7 x 17.8 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

JULIE SPIELMAN

Julie Spielman's practice investigates the construction of personal histories as they relate to people's cultural backgrounds. Through conversation, film, and photography, she examines inherited and chosen influences in the lives of friends and family to discover how such forces have shaped them. *a father's stories* (2008), for example, presents the family history of a second-generation Jewish immigrant as a text, simply stringing together short sentences that sum up the story of what could be any family's immigration to the United States. Only when the artist reveals her identity in the last sentence, and we realize it is her father speaking, does it become apparent that the story told has a broader cultural dimension. The lineage indicated by her name renders the ordinary story exemplary: it capsules the fate of not just one family but a whole people.

Jewish history is also at the center of *the galveston plan* (2008). Displayed on a homemade light table are twenty-three transparencies that document a sun-drenched Galveston on a quiet day; the empty harbor, boardwalk, streets, and plazas are populated only by a lone red bicycle. Although a modest presence on the fringes of each scene, its constant appearance slowly reveals the bicycle and not the beach town as the actual protagonist in this suite of images, virtually transporting us from place to place. Obviously, a record keeper is at work in the form of the artist taking the photographs, but rather than asserting her presence, the successive images speak of absence. The title couches this absence in historical terms: the "Galveston Plan" was an ini-

tiative launched in 1907 by members of the local Jewish Immigration Information Bureau (JIIB) to redirect Eastern European Jewish immigrants away from the overcrowded port of New York to entry through Galveston, encouraging the establishment of smaller Jewish communities throughout the West. The driving force behind the Galveston Plan was a man named Jacob H. Schiff, who coordinated the Industrial Removal Office in New York City, but Spielman has a much more personal connection to the story. Her father wrote the biography of a strong man, later called the "Mighty Atom," whose immigration to Texas had been aided by Rabbi Henry Cohen, a prominent member of the JIIB. Cycling around the ports to welcome immigrants and assist them in finding employment, Cohen was known to everyone as the "rabbi on the bicycle." This image of the rabbi riding around Galveston in search of people in need left a deep impression on Spielman. Although she is originally from Long Island, New York, her recent move to Houston brought this memory back and prompted her to revisit the place of Rabbi Cohen's good deeds. With *the galveston plan*, Spielman offers homage to this humble man, whose dedication helped change many lives for the better. In bringing this chapter of Galveston history literally to light, Spielman also draws attention to the issues of immigration and changing demographics that mark today's sociopolitical climate. Unfortunately these days, most immigrants don't encounter a rabbi on a bicycle willing to personally fight for their survival and well-being.



Top:
the galveston plan, 2008.
23 medium-format transparencies on light table,
42½ x 26 x 18 inches
(107.9 x 66 x 45.7 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom left:
a father's stories, 2008.
Ink on paper, 12 x 9 inches
(30.5 x 22.9 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom right:
untitled (gift), 2007.
Digital print,
36 x 24 inches (91.4 x 61 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

GABRIELA TRZEBINSKI

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, to a Polish father and an English mother, educated in London, and now living in Houston, Gabriela Trzebinski is a global nomad. Since leaving art school, she has mined her sensibility as a “third culture” child, whose notion of true belonging is forever called into question by her multinational and multicultural existence. Trzebinski operates in the gap between estrangement and familiarity to engage issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and religion. For many years now, Trzebinski’s negotiation of cultural identity has focused on Africa as the place where her contradictory sense of (non)adherence is thrown into sharpest relief. Her race and heritage as a fair-skinned woman of European origin superficially sets her apart from the majority of the population, yet the country of her childhood is inescapably ingrained in her heart and soul. While black Africans may refuse to accept that she shares their sense of Kenyan identity, her paintings affirm her inner “Africanness” through an all-black cast of characters and scenarios grounded in her own experience of the country.

Showing a claustrophobic bird’s-eye view of a figure confined to a cell and strapped onto a bed, *General Hannibal* (2005) illustrates Trzebinski’s personal brush with “near insanity” during a five-year period when she was obsessively investigating her brother’s unsolved 2001 murder in Kenya. Trying to get to the bottom of what was officially labeled a carjacking, Trzebinski dove into the Nairobi underworld in a desperate search for clues that would lead to her brother’s killers, but had to abandon her quest in order to save

her own life. Although haunted by this violent personal history, Trzebinski insists on the co-existence of beauty and cruelty in her work. *My Daddy is a Tranny* (2006) is an ironic take on Kenyans’ conflicted attitude toward homosexuality. Although technically illegal, it is commonly known that the tourist industry in certain towns thrives on man-on-man sex, and males dress as women for indigenous ceremonial purposes. While no signs of imprisonment are apparent, the image of the half-naked, cross-dressing man carries within its tightly cropped frame a sense of confinement that negates any sexual freedom this state of undress and masquerade would normally allude to.

Painting scenes of murder, imprisonment, illicit sex, or political injustice, Trzebinski seeks to expose the harsh realities of life on the African continent, but her faux-naïve style assures that her work does so with great tenderness and humor. The same is true of work that deals with issues closer to Trzebinski’s new American home, where she has directed her attention to the history and perspective of other marginalized peoples and cultures. Whether addressing the potentially deadly fate of border runners in *El Papa Murio por Nosotros en la Frontera* (2006) or the persistence of a clan mentality in efforts to undo the civil rights movement in *Bigfoot* (2007), she tackles new issues with the same boldness and conviction that defines her work about Africa. Trzebinski’s love and care for anything African or marginalized takes the form of a passionate advocacy that crosses all conventional boundaries set by nationality, race, and gender.



Top:
My Daddy is a Tranny, 2006.
Oil on linen, 60 x 60 inches
(152.4 x 152.4 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom right:
General Hannibal, 2005.
Oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches
(61 x 61 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom left:
Bigfoot, 2007.
Oil on linen,
30 x 30 inches
(76.2 x 76.2 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

JEFF WILLIAMS

Jeff Williams has a keen eye for beauty in the abject. Exposing the rotten foundations, moldy caulk, and piles of dust encroaching on our homes, he draws attention to the corrosive elements of nature that find their way into the built environment despite our best efforts to keep them at bay. Rather than denying the ubiquitous presence of pollution and contamination, Williams reveals their inherent aesthetic qualities and posits them as an integral part of modern-day existence that, desired or not, contributes to the look and feel of our lives.

Williams's installation *Thickly Settled* (2008) is composed of a drywall element framing a suite of venetian blinds. Set inside Blaffer Gallery's window facade, it simultaneously emphasizes and obscures the structure of the building. In the gallery, the installation appears to be a cleanly painted wall with blinds inserted into openings cut to reveal the existing windows. Hinged at various levels, the blinds alternately allow and block views into and out of the space. On the front, the blinds are covered with electrostatic flocking fiber, an artificial dust that has seemingly gathered over time and is there to stay. The fiber is incredibly adhesive and durable: appearances to the contrary, it is impossible to swipe off or vacuum up. Williams introduced this synthetic dust in his 2007 series of works carrying the same title, where he used it to coat everyday objects that "speak to ideas of circulation and accumulation," such as vents, microwaves, carpets, and houseplants. The material provokes an oddly ambivalent response in the viewer, who vacillates between repulsion and attraction: soft and inviting to the touch, the fiber also looks unclean and potentially hazardous. The associations triggered by the ordinary objects thus transformed are manifold, ranging from apocalyptic visions of a contaminated world in the grip of disaster

to more melancholy contemplations of things forgotten or left behind, gathering dust in the cluttered backrooms of our minds.

Williams's work for the Houston Area Exhibition expands this skein of references by adding a new quality: insulation. From the outside, all we see are the traces of construction: the two-by-fours and sheetrock that make up the wall, plus the hardware used to hold it in place, and the backsides of the blinds. Around the blinds—visible only from the courtyard—the wall frame is filled with fiberglass insulation, a material similar in its aesthetic effect to the electrostatic flocking fiber, but much more forgiving on the eyes due to its colorful properties.

Again, Williams draws our attention to what is usually hidden out of sight. Although we know of the need for insulation in our homes, the material is usually tucked away behind the finished surfaces of the walls surrounding us. In the windows of Blaffer Gallery, however, the insulation itself is on display. In a startling inversion of expectations, its highly toxic quality is placed in plain sight, accosting the visitor in all its synthetic splendor. But, of course, the insulation also operates on a metaphorical level, pointing to the museum as an insular and elitist institution, as well as to the buffering impulses of the world at large. Insulation might be a good term to describe the current political climate in which the protection of borders and national interests seems paramount. Fortunately Williams doesn't seem to regard protectionism as an efficient political strategy. As insulated as his wall may be, it still allows for transparency. After all, the figurative walls of the museum as well as the borders of most countries in the world are still open to outside influences and exchange.



Top:
Mantle (1100 Milford St.),
2008. On-site wall construction: wood, drywall, primer, 127 x 109 x 18 inches (322.6 x 276.9 x 45.7 cm). Courtesy the artist.

Bottom left:
Thickly Settled, 2007.
Adhesive and electrostatic flocking fiber on vinyl mini blinds, 23 x 47½ x 2½ inches (58.4 x 120.7 x 6.4 cm). Installation view at LA><ART, Los Angeles, 2007.

Bottom right:
Mantle (1100 Milford St.),
2008 (detail).

AUDRY WORSTER

Audry Worster's paintings lay bare the artist's struggle to give tangible shape to the fleeting images of memory. Most of the memories that hold her captive and lead her to work on a canvas for months at a time are of places with a compelling atmospheric quality. Worster is not interested in depicting these places per se, but instead attempts to capture the lingering sensations they imparted. The irrational and unpredictable mechanisms of remembrance drive the process, only to reveal their own unreliability.

Moonbow (2008) is a case in point: The painting was inspired by the sight of a lunar rainbow hovering above a creek flanked by large boulders. But unlike the color-bleached reality of the night scene, Worster has cast her rendition in vibrant hues. The painting consists primarily of one massive boulder-like form in blazing colors, with a rounded point or nose that seemingly pushes its way into the canvas before coming to a halt. A blue sickle-like shape, suggestive of the eponymous moonbow, sprouts from the tip of this nose and curves to the bottom of the canvas. Here it rejoins another body of blue paint streaming from the fiery oval of the boulder, the poured and scraped paint effectively emulating the flow of water. As if to compensate for the spectral monochrome of the night, Worster has infused the scene with all the colors of the rainbow and imbued it with an energetic material presence that belies the fleeting nature of the phenomenon that residing in her memory.

Smokies and *Metropolis* (both 2008) are equally subjective invocations of two very different places that loom large in the artist's imagination. In *Smokies*, two massive black and purple shapes in the bottom left and right of the canvas anchor the composition. Set against a background of light blues and grays, these dark forms are ominous presences that have little in common with the luscious green vegetation covering the mountainous landscape outside of Knoxville, Tennessee, where Worster spent her graduate school years. The painterly focus, however, is upon the sky—the dense layers of colors give it a tangible presence, as if the name of the mountain range were translated into an atmospheric concept more powerful than the picturesque reality.

In *Metropolis*, crystalline structures define a painterly collage dominated by lines and hard edges that point to a very different experiential memory. Harking back to early modernist renditions of the upward thrust of industrialization, it speaks to the urban experience in a formal language universally recognizable as one associated with the birth of the modern city. For Worster, *Metropolis* marks her arrival in Houston, and as this painting suggests, the metropolitan environment can still feel as novel and challenging as it did over a hundred years ago.



Top:
Moonbow, 2008.
Oil on canvas,
60 x 72 inches
(152.4 x 182.9 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Smokies, 2008.
Oil on canvas,
60 x 72 inches
(152.4 x 182.9 cm).
Courtesy the artist.

BIOGRAPHIES

SETH ALVERSON

b. 1979, Houston

Education

2002 BFA, University of Houston

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 "Ghost Survivor of the Final Plague," Art Palace, Austin, Texas

2006 "Thunderdome," Lawndale Art Center, Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "Aqua Art Fair" (with Art Palace), Miami Beach, Florida

"The Joanna Drawing Show," Joanna Gallery, Houston

"The Sirens' Song," Arthouse, Austin, Texas

2006 "Baroque Visions and Urban Verities," Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, San Antonio

"Beast," Finesilver Gallery, Houston

WILLIAM BETTS

b. 1962, New York

Education

1991 BA, Arizona State University, Tempe

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 "Safe," Peter Miller Gallery Ltd., Chicago

2007 "Interference," Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston

"Overseen," Margaret Thatcher Projects, New York

"View from the Panopticon," Richard Levy Gallery, Albuquerque

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "B & W," Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston

Collectors Gallery, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

"Texas Biennial," Bolm Studios, Austin, Texas

2006 "Watch It! Television's Influence in Art," Stony Brook University, New York

SASHA DELA

b. 1975, Atlanta

Education

2005 MFA, California College of the Arts, San Francisco

2000 BFA, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas

Women & Their Work, Austin, Texas

2007 "Natural Commodity," Lawndale Art Center, Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "Core Artists in Residence Exhibition," Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

"World View," Dallas Contemporary

2006 "Blackout," DiverseWorks, Houston

"New American Talent: 21," Arthouse, Austin, Texas

Awards

2008 Finalist, Artadia Award, Houston

2007 Eliza Randall Prize, Core Program, Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (also in 2005)

2006 Nominee, Texas Prize, Arthouse, Austin, Texas

JONATHAN DURHAM

b. 1975, Lynchburg, Virginia

Education

2000 MFA, UCLA School of Arts and Architecture, Los Angeles

1997 BA, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2006 "Why Is Thy Sting?" Lawndale Art Center, Houston

2004 "Cyrus (The Younger)/Zero Degree Monumentality," Old Nature Gallery, Charlottesville, Virginia

"Lucky 13," ADA Gallery, Richmond, Virginia

"New Sculpture & Video," Fayerweather Gallery, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Material Culture," Fort Worth Contemporary Arts, Texas Christian University

2007 "Core Artists in Residence Exhibition," Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

"New American Talent: 22," Arthouse, Austin, Texas

2006 "Drawing Inside/Out," Lawndale Art Center, Houston

HANA HILLEROVA

b. 1975, Prague

Education

2004 MFA, University of Texas, Austin

2000 MGR, Charles University, Prague

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 "Drawings and Sculptures," Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston

"Transfigurations," Lawndale Art Center, Houston

2007 "Thoughtforms," Sala Diaz, San Antonio

2006 "Super Space," Women & Their Work, Austin, Texas

Selected Group Exhibitions

2006 "New Art in Austin: 22 to Watch," Austin Museum of Art, Texas

2005 "Dense," Project Row Houses, Houston
"SLOMO Video," Slow Motion Videos World Tour, San Francisco

2004 "Domino Effect: Analog / Digital," Santa Fe Art Institute

Awards

2005 Female Artist of the Year, Austin Critics Table Award, Texas

Nominee, Texas Prize, Arthouse, Austin, Texas

HEDWIGE JACOBS

b. 1971, Singapore (citizen of The Netherlands)

Education

2004 MFA, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia

1994 BFA, Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague, The Netherlands

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 "Second Impressions," Jenny Jaskey Gallery, Philadelphia

2006 "Déjà Vu," Philadelphia Art Alliance

2003 "Zomer expositie," Ernst & Young, The Hague, The Netherlands

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "Animated Drawings," CTRL Gallery, Houston

"Pushing the Envelope," Williams Tower Gallery, Houston

2006 "ColourForma," Ice Box Project Space, Philadelphia

2005 "Area," Union Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park

2004 "Naked," June Fitzpatrick Gallery, Portland, Maine

Awards

2007 Finalist, Hunting Art Prize, Houston

2004 Fellowship Trust Prize, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia

2003 Nominee, Dedalus Foundation, New York

ANDRES JANACUA

b. 1982, Los Angeles

Education

2007 MFA, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California

2004 BFA, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 "boxing: andres," galería perdida, Houston

2007 "Andres Janacua and Julie Spielman: Birth," galería perdida, Los Angeles
"Comida Corrida," galería perdida, Michoacán, Mexico

"Teléfono," galería perdida, Michoacán, Mexico

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Towards a New Architecture," galería perdida, Houston

2007 "criteria," galería perdida at Schalter, Berlin

"el cielo no llora," galería perdida, Michoacán, Mexico

2006 "Pochos," galería perdida, Michoacán, Mexico

NICHOLAS KERSULIS

b. 1964, East St. Louis, Illinois

Education

2000 MFA, University of California, Los Angeles

1996 BFA, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2004 "A Matter of Seconds," 4F Gallery, Los Angeles

2003 "White Panel Project," Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Core Artists in Residence Exhibition," Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

"Outpost," CTRL Gallery, Houston

2007 "De Pasada Por Los Angeles," Atelier als Supermedium, Artists Space for Contemporary Art, The Hague, The Netherlands

2006 "Five Habitats: Squatting at Langton," New Langton Arts, San Francisco

2004 "100 Artists See God," Independent Curators International, New York (catalogue); traveled to The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Contemporary Art Center of Virginia, Virginia Beach; Freedman Gallery, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania; Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville

Awards

2007 Eliza Randall Prize, Core Program, Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

2004 Creative Capitol Professional Development Award, New York

MINDY KOBER

b. 1976, Houston

Education

2005 MFA, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

2002 BFA, University of Houston

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 "Microcosm," Jung Center, Houston

2005 "I'm a Hustler, Baby," Olive Tjaden Gallery, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

2004 "Current," Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, Michigan

2003 "Mindy Kober: New Work," Mulcahy Modern, Dallas

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Paper Dolls," Pulp, Omaha

2007 "Radical Nautical," Gallery Lombardi, Austin, Texas

2006 "Mulcahy Modern: 06," Mulcahy Modern, Dallas

2005 "Gun Show," OneTen Gallery,
Madison, Wisconsin.

Awards

2007 New American Paintings Award,
Western States

JONATHAN C. LEACH

b. 1977, Lexington, Kentucky

Education

2000 BFA, The School of the
Art Institute of Chicago

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2006 The Waypost Gallery, Portland, Oregon

2004 "Aesthetic Evolution," The Coloroom,
Lexington, Kentucky

2002 "If Memory Serves....," Aylesford Gallery,
Lexington, Kentucky

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "Contemporary Landscapes,"
Evoke Gallery, St. Paul, Minnesota

2006 "Freeway Hypnosis," Tilt Gallery,
Portland, Oregon

"Saturation," Disjecta Art Center,
Portland, Oregon

2005 "Small Wonders," Mark Woolley Gallery,
Portland, Oregon

Awards

2008 Finalist, Hunting Art Prize, Houston

LYNNE MCCABE

b. 1975, Glasgow

Education

1999 BA, Glasgow School of Art

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 "pot-luck," Project Row Houses,
Houston

2005 "pot-luck," Cactus Bra Space,
San Antonio

"pot-luck," Commerce Street Artists'
Warehouse, Houston

2002 "The Caledonian Institute for the Study
of Interpersonal Relationships presents a
series of intimate exchanges hosted by
Lynne McCabe," Lawndale Art Center,
Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "what we want is too late,"
Lawndale Art Center, Houston

2005 "WHO ARE YOU?,"
DiverseWorks, Houston

2004 "Arthropodic Animal: Insecta,"
DiverseWorks, Houston

"Blown Up," Aurora Picture Show and
the Glassell School of Art, Houston

Awards

2005 Nominee, Texas Prize, Arthouse,
Austin, Texas

1999 Open Show Prize, Art League Houston

ARIANE ROESCH

b. 1984, Würzburg, Germany

Education

2007 BFA, University of Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "BIOTOP," tmp.deluxe, Berlin

"In a New Direction," wall space, Seattle

2007 "Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead),"
Lawndale Arts Center, Houston

"Recent Work by Ariane Roesch
and Andrew Taylor," De Santos
Gallery, Houston

"Vestiges," Poissant Gallery, Houston

2006 Annual Student Show,
Blaffer Gallery, Houston

JULIE SPIELMAN

b. 1980, Malverne, New York

Education

2007 MFA, Claremont Graduate University,
Claremont, California

2002 BA, Occidental College, Los Angeles

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 "If The Moment Should Fail Us,"
East Gallery, Claremont Graduate
University, California

"mi hija," galería perdida,
Michoacán, Mexico

2006 "She's gone," Sydney Non Objective
Group

"Six Studies," NOT Gallery,
Toowoomba, Australia

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Outpost," CTRL Gallery, Houston

"Otherwise Constricted,"
Project Row Houses, Houston

2007 "criteria," galería perdida at
Schalter, Berlin

"Presence of the New,"
Shotgun Space, Los Angeles

Awards

2008 Finalist, Hunting Art Prize, Houston

GABRIELA TRZEBINSKI

b. 1962, Nairobi, Kenya

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2006 "New Paintings and the 'Matatu'
Project," George Adams Gallery,
New York

2003 "Exhibition of Recent Paintings by
Gabriela Trzebinski," Jan Murphy
Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

2001 'L'art de vivre la maison,"
French Cultural Center, Nairobi, Kenya

2000 "My First Sony," Rebecca Hossack
Gallery, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 "Camp Marfa," Art Depot,
Lubbock, Texas

"Little Known Facts,"
Lawndale Art Center, Houston

"Uterior Motifs 12," Crazywood Gallery,
Huntsville, Texas

"War," Art Car Museum, Houston

Awards

2008 Finalist, Artadia Award, Houston

JEFF WILLIAMS

b. 1976, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Education

2002 MFA, Syracuse University,
Syracuse, New York

1998 BFA, Columbus College of Art and
Design, Columbus, Ohio

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 "Thickly Settled," Okay Mountain,
Austin, Texas

2006 "North of the Ozarks" (with Michael
Hein), Hotcakes Gallery, Milwaukee

2005 "More Like Real Wood" (with Michael
Hein), Limbo Fine Arts, San Diego

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008 "Core Artists in Residence Exhibition,"
Glassell School of Art, Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston

"Round 28," Project Row Houses,
Houston

"Towards a New Architecture,"
galería perdida, Houston

2007 "One Day I Will Control the Sun,"
Arsenal Gallery, New York

"Thickly Settled," LA><ART
(LA><WINDOW), Los Angeles

2006 "New American Talent: 21," Arthouse,
Austin, Texas.

Awards

2007 Eliza Randall Prize, Core Program,
Glassell School of Art, Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston

John O'Neil Memorial Research Grant,
Rice University, Houston

2005 Hugh Davies Juror's Award, William D.
Cannon Art Gallery, Carlsbad, California

AUDRY WORSTER

b. 1979, Austin, Texas

Education

2006 MFA, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

2001 BFA, Murray State University, Kentucky

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2006 "La La La," Ewing Gallery of Art and
Architecture, University of Tennessee,
Knoxville

2005 "Second Year: Recent Paintings," Gallery
1010, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

2004 "For The Sake of Beauty," Woodruff
Building, Knoxville, Tennessee

2001 "Speculation," Clara M. Eagle Gallery,
Murray, Kentucky

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007 Faculty Introduction,
North Harris College, Houston

2006 "New American Talent: 21,"
Arthouse, Austin, Texas

Tenant Show, Commerce Street Artists'
Warehouse, Houston

