

Stephanie Dinkins
Christa Erickson
Grady Gerbracht
Nobuho Nagasawa

RECENT VISIONS

Sept 14 - Oct 16, 2004

University Art Gallery
Staller Center for the Arts
Stony Brook University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Stephanie Dinkins, Christa Erickson, Grady Gerbracht, and Nobuho Nagasawa, the Art Department's four most recent faculty additions, for creating this very innovative and exciting exhibition. They engage the social, political, and personal issues of today through the tools and media around them, sometimes working in public spaces, all using video, sound, and unusual materials within their practices.

I also want to express my appreciation to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Pete Pantaleo and Michelle Wacker, for exhibition assistance; Amy Bagshaw, Yan Ling Ruan, Margaret Sung, Tan Yu Jing, and Jeanelle Thorpe, Gallery Assistants; Ryoko Gulizia, Soomin Kang, Amanda Smith, and Gigi Singh, Gallery Interns; Liz Silver, Technical Director, and the Staller Center Technical Crew for assistance with exhibition lighting; and Hilary Whitely, Assistant to the Gallery Director. Many thanks go to Christa Erickson, Associate Professor in the Department of Art, for designing the exhibition catalogue and website that accompany this exhibition.

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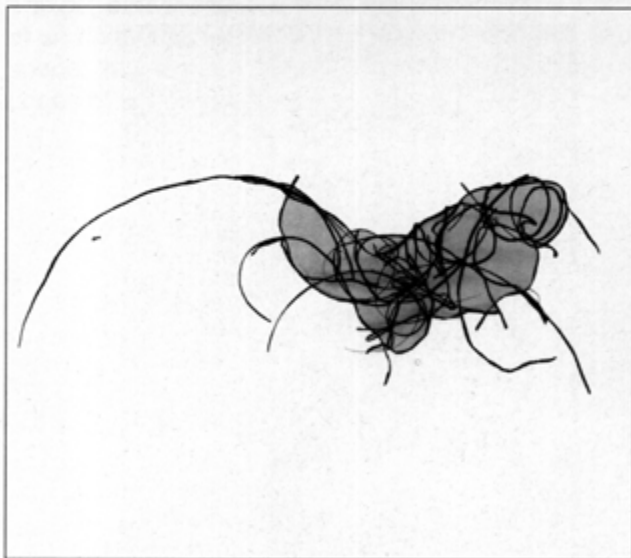
Rhonda Cooper
Gallery Director

STEPHANIE DINKINS

Assistant Professor

Electronic Media, Photography, and Video

My work explores issues of value and visibility through an image-based art practice. By combining objects and ideas that hold disparate, often adversarial, intellectual, monetary, and historical values, I explore the ways in which contemporary culture tends to conflate fact, fiction, need, desire, nature, technology... The works I am presenting in *Recent Visions* approach similar ideas from multiple perspectives. The digitally-produced "drawings," excerpts from the *Hair Drawing Series*, are an attempt to emulate a canonically revered art form while simultaneously challenging that canon by removing the handwork from the practice of drawing and by working with a medium, discarded body hair, that rides the line between seduction and disgust. This series, which is inspired by my grandmother, who would often ask if I could see, as she did, a flower, a face, a horse, lurking in the amorphous shape of a cloud, also represents a visual legacy handed from one generation to the next. Similarly, *Eclipse : Beyond* and the other sculptural works presented here seek to turn issues that are blaringly evident to some, hardly considered by others, back out on the world in visually compelling forms that confront the issue and illuminate the fortitude of those affected by the issue. These pieces, as with most of my work, are steps toward reconciling the multifarious, often contradictory histories, cultural practices, knowledge bases, and philosophies that converge to inform me, and the greater American culture.



Untitled # 1 (from the *Hair Drawing Series*), 2003
10.75" X 10.75" Inkjet print



Eclipse : Beyond, 2003
DVD projection

CHRISTA ERICKSON

Associate Professor

Electronic Installation, Digital Media, and Video

I am fascinated by the stories we tell ourselves about our bodies and the technologies that increasingly mediate our experience of them. We use imaging technologies like photography, film, and video to help us remember. We leave traces of our existence in countless databases. Communications technologies extend our voices, eyes, hands, and presence geographically and in realtime. Various technologies of "convenience" help us organize our lives, often disciplining our bodies to their configurations and leaving us tangled in the wires of their power needs. My work looks to reveal such aspects of contemporary experience by combining and juxtaposing bits of video, sound, found and constructed objects, performance, electronics, and computer controls.

The *REplay Series* examines relationships between memory and its triggers, using imagery shot on Super8 film to suggest home movies or a flickery memory. These works explore gender, sexuality, and family through psychological loops. Games, rhymes, objects, stories, technologies, and even taunts from childhood reverberate throughout one's life. Thus, in *REplay* an adult body tries to remember some of the magic and horror by enacting and reframing old gestures. Personal and fictional stories are told in an attempt to reconcile present and past. Projected imagery is frozen in time until triggered by the presence of a viewer. Playback of footage of climbing a giant ladder to an idealized home is literally controlled by the volatile up and down fortunes of the stock market and the larger economic climate it reflects; yet the goal is perpetually out of reach.

As with much of my work, the more personal pieces in *Recent Visions* employ a few of what I think of as cinematic devices. These devices often ask the viewer to participate in an experience, sometimes literally using their bodies as an interface, or tie the experience in the gallery to live data from the Internet.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to the Islip Art Museum for supporting the development of the initial elements of *REplay* and to Michelle Wacker, Kate Diago, Glenn Webb, Lawrence Mesich, and Joe DiPonio for camera/production assistance.



Salteater and Rewind from *REplay Series*, 2002-4
Interactive video and mixed-media installation



Remembering/Forgetting (detail) from *REplay Series*, 2003
Portable DVD, wood, rope, pulley, chalkboard

GRADY GERBRACHT

Assistant Professor

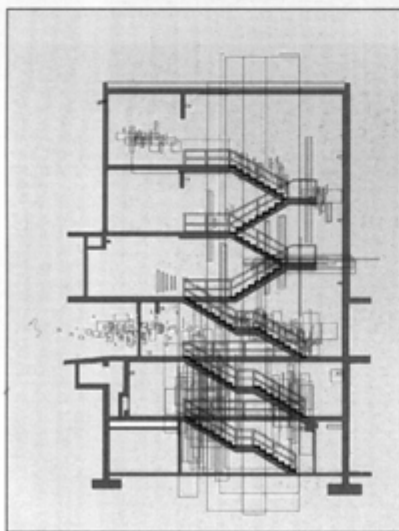
Design, Installation, Sound and Conceptual Drawing

My work focuses on the ordering systems of everyday life. Inspired by personal observations and life experiences, my projects employ performance, architecture, sound and social dynamics to render these systems temporarily visible, drawing them forth from the collective subconscious for review. When we examine the structures that govern daily life, we are confronted by the roles we play in them as well as the influence they sustain in the construction and maintenance of our identities. While re-inhabiting the spaces of daily life, we experience the vital agency to evaluate our relationships to elusive social, cultural and institutional regimes; to each other; and to ourselves.

Conceived as a Spatial Portrait, *Site & Sound: Stairwell Improvisation* examines the border between performance and everyday life. Challenging the distinction between audience and performer, the event takes place in the semi-public space of stairwell No.29, where members of an unsuspecting public may encounter the performance. The artist does not perform *in* the space but rather performs the space itself, activating it with the body by rhythmic and tonal improvisation. The event is scored. The score is a map, visual evidence of the sonic events that have unfolded within the site during the performance. The visual structure around which this notation is based is an architectural drawing (section) of the stairwell.

UnderLINE, a collaboration with Claudia Vieira, is a single line map drawn in time and space using a bicycle with an attached camera and segments of line borrowed from the streets of Kyoto. Excluding fixed destinations, chance recordings capture fleeting moments from everyday life. Perpetual movement animates the line, constructing a topology that overlaps the artists' urban experiences with those of the residents. *UnderLINE* is a spatial record of time passing, a metaphor linking the intersections of collective experience.

The projects presented in *Recent Visions* draw from a variety of theoretical discourses. They are part of an ongoing investigation of experimental techniques for mapping the navigation and performance of space; they explore the ways in which our bodies can be used to reveal and potentially subvert proper codes of social behavior.



Sound Diagram from *Site & Sound: Stairwell Improvisation*, 2002



Still from *underLINE*, 2004
Video and sound installation

NOBUHO NAGASAWA

Associate Professor

Sculpture, Installation, and Public Art

I view art making as excavation of meanings – cultural, geopolitical, social, personal – that lie hidden within materials themselves, as well as their uses and contexts. Transparent glass hammers made out of lead crystal, though part of a larger installation work, stand on their own as challenging objects. Tools, often considered crucial to human evolution, play a complex and ambiguous role in life — bullets kill yet protect, atomic fusion brings energy and mass destruction, hammers build and destroy. Yet what defines the object, its role, and the (human/art) acts of making and using it—material, shape, opacity, hardness, use, intention, beauty...?

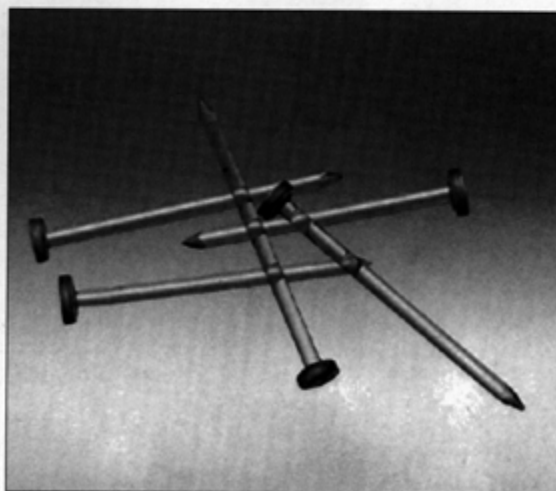
Diagrammatic wall maps, made of hammered nails, represent both the United States — site of the work and its conception — and Iraq — site not only of the "fate" of our tools, but also of the supposed origin of civilization's greatest tool, written language (Babylon, circa 6000 BC). Tools create, reveal, excavate, preserve, record, interpret, and manipulate history ("our story"), and they do it by the tool's inherent capacity to serve also as sign, symbol, metaphor, art, even sacralized object. The tools that do our work and our dirty work cannot see themselves, but we can see them and ourselves and even "see through" them and ourselves.

Glass is both one of mankind's most ancient materials and itself a tool. When annealed, glass is a fluid material that can be either transparent or translucent depending on the crafting method. For this series, I chose a type of glass that contains a high percentage of lead, which makes the glass flow and achieve an optical clarity when polished. Lead (like glass and indeed all materials) is inherently ambiguous — a poisonous, potentially fatal substance that is also the only material that protects from radiation. Raw materials become the tools with which we make tools; materials and tools determine and reflect each other; and they determine and reflect the lives and histories of those who make them. Art itself is a tool by which this complex situation is rendered "clear" and open to further reflection.

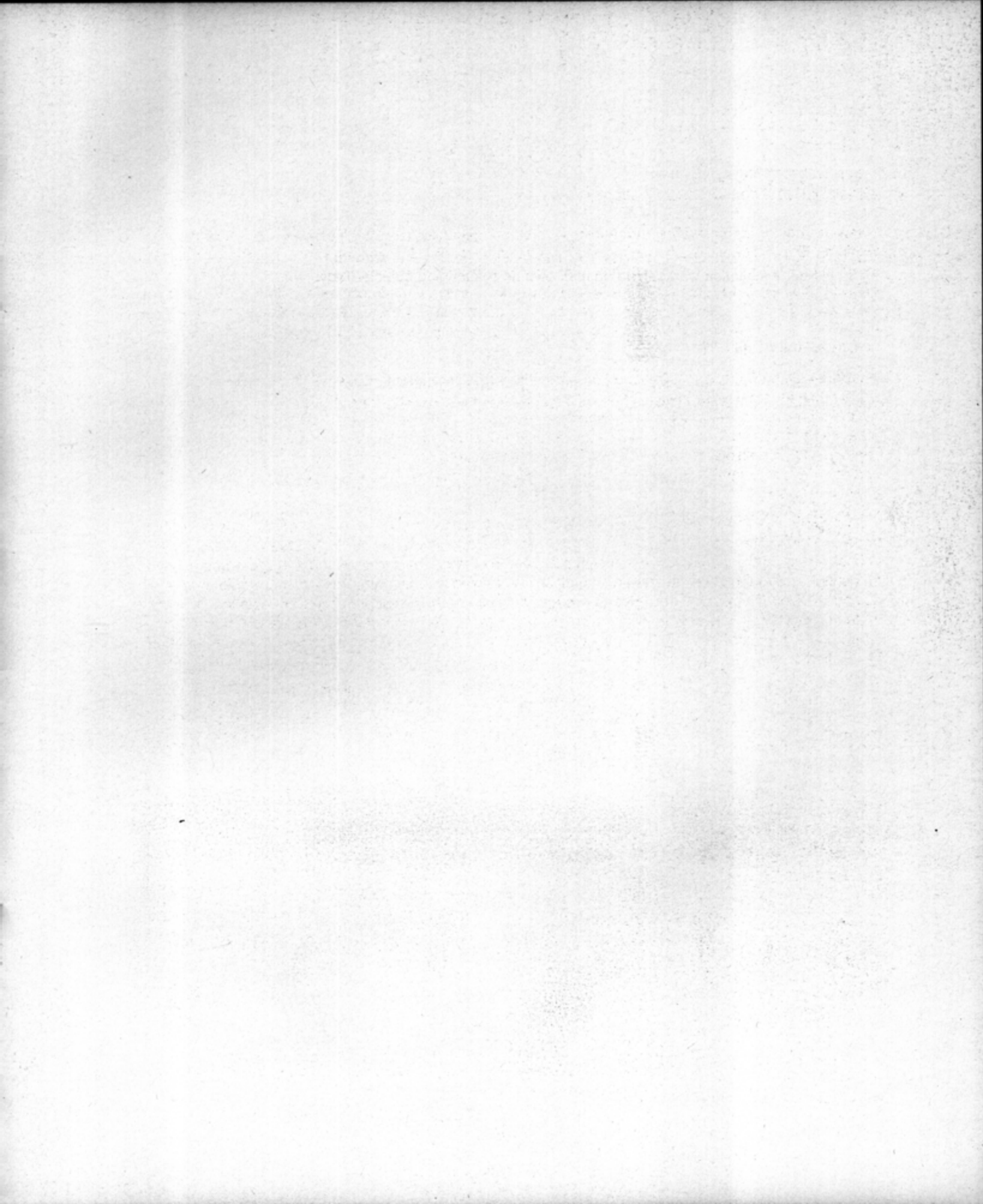
Acknowledgments: Working in glass was possible thanks to my eight-week studio fellowship at Urban Glass in Brooklyn this summer. My enthusiastic thanks to Executive Director Dawn Bennett, Operations Manager Brian Kibler, and all the shop technicians, Deborah Adler, Matt Enos, Trinh Ngyuen, Rob Panepinto, Ezra Willey, and the glass artists, Glenn Abel and Kevin Huang-Cruz. And special thanks to Rachel Katster, an MFA student at Rochester Institute of Technology who assisted me for three weeks during the process of casting.



Prepubescent Hammers, 2004
Cast wax



Nails, 2004
Pyrex glass



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Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, New York 11794-5425
Tel: 631.632.7240 Fax: 631.632.1976