

MFA THESIS EXHIBITION 2010



...this is what we leave with

February 6 - 27, 2010
University Art Gallery
Stony Brook University

Introduction

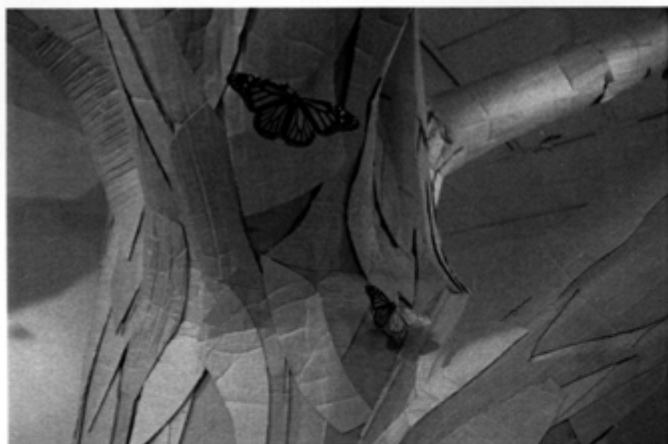
This year marks the 22nd anniversary of the MFA Thesis Exhibition and the 25th year since the MFA program was established at Stony Brook. The program has attracted top students from all over the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Our students have sought out and benefited from a program that encourages dynamic interaction between the artists in the MFA program and the art historians/critics enrolled in the department's MA/Ph.D. program. The Art Department is unusual in providing this type of close collaboration between traditionally diverse practices. Nowhere else are advanced studio and art history and criticism students able to benefit from each other's courses and ideas.

The Master of Fine Arts at Stony Brook is a unique three-year, sixty-hour terminal professional degree that is designed to maintain a small enrollment (we allow no more than twenty candidates in residence) and to encourage considerable interaction with our professional faculty and their many important contacts in the New York City art world. We are uniquely situated geographically, close enough to NYC and its fabulous museums, galleries, studios, and other cultural venues to make recurrent visits easy, yet sufficiently distant to enjoy insulation from the density and pressures of the City. In the relative peace provided by the suburban, even rural, environment of Long Island's North Shore, our graduate students are able to focus on their work in their recently renovated studios on campus. Additionally, we have the advantage of being part of a large, renowned research university with centers not only in Stony Brook itself but also in Manhattan and Southampton, close to the historic Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center (the latter now housed on the Southampton campus), administered by the Art Department. We benefit from associate faculty in Philosophy, History, Women's Studies, the Humanities Institute, and Cinema and Cultural Studies. We are also part of the Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture and Technology (cDACT). Faculty in these areas are readily available to our MFA candidates, who are required to take nine credits of liberal arts and to write a thesis in connection with their one-person exhibitions in the Lawrence Alloway Memorial Gallery. Students have profited from material, practical, and intellectual assistance from other, even unrelated, departments at Stony Brook: They have blown glass with the chemists, studied metallurgy with the engineers, investigated optics with the Physics Department; established creative connections with computer science, music, and theater; and presented their work in a variety of venues on campus, thus encouraging interaction with faculty and students from other departments.

University Art Gallery Director Rhonda Cooper deserves a heartfelt thanks for her energy, competence, efficiency, and design sense in staging these often challenging exhibitions by our graduating MFA students. The success of our students is readily apparent in the 2010 MFA exhibition, and we are proud of each and every one of them.

Anita Moskowitz
Chairperson
Department of Art

Arrival (detail), 2009
Kinetic multimedia installation



Joseph Andrew Esser

For as long as I can remember, I've taken things apart and rebuilt them. From Lego blocks to my first car, I've always learned how things function by disassembling them. My curiosity has since expanded well beyond the realm of the physical.

My current body of work examines wondrous and beautiful phenomena that occur in nature, such as fireflies congregating at dusk or the epic yearly gathering of monarch butterflies. My kinetic, interactive sculptural installations recreate the experience of these natural occurrences and bring to light their inherent fragility. The experience created by each installation is merely a facsimile; like a postcard, it can only give a faint impression of the real experience. To reinforce the translational nature of the work, I carefully expose particular elements of the true electronic and mechanical aspects of the sculpture. This full disclosure, which is fundamental to the work, also leads the viewer to consider the difficulty inherent in recreating the experience through technological means, implying the possibility that this duplicate is the only experience that will be preserved for future generations.

I utilize steel, wood, PMMA (Plexiglas), cardboard, found objects, microcontrollers, motors, custom electronics and computers to construct my sculptural installations. Rather than disguising these elements, I embrace their essential visual features and leave them deliberately exposed.

My works use interactive components. From hand-cranks to less tactile means of interaction (electronic sensors), I invite the user to become a participant rather than merely an observer. This interaction allows the viewer to contemplate their personal responsibility in the matter at hand.



Indicator (detail), 2009
Interactive multimedia installation



Stoned, 2009

Installation: mixed media prints, hand dyed fabric, found rocks, styrofoam.
Dimensions variable

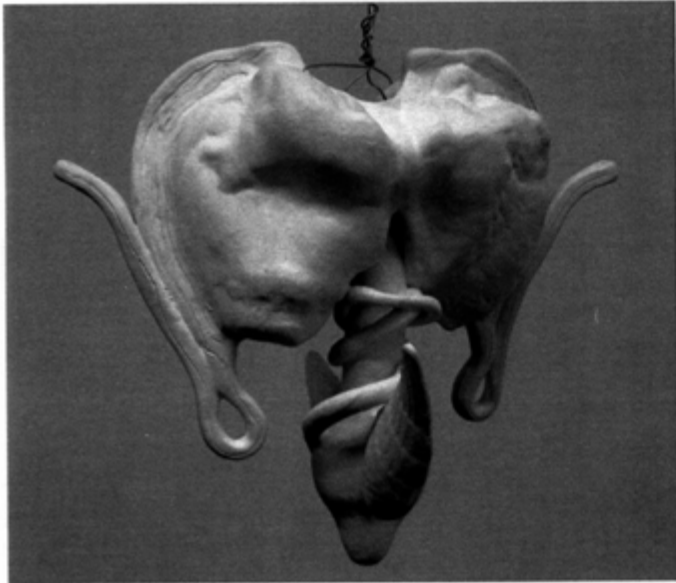


Stoned, 2009

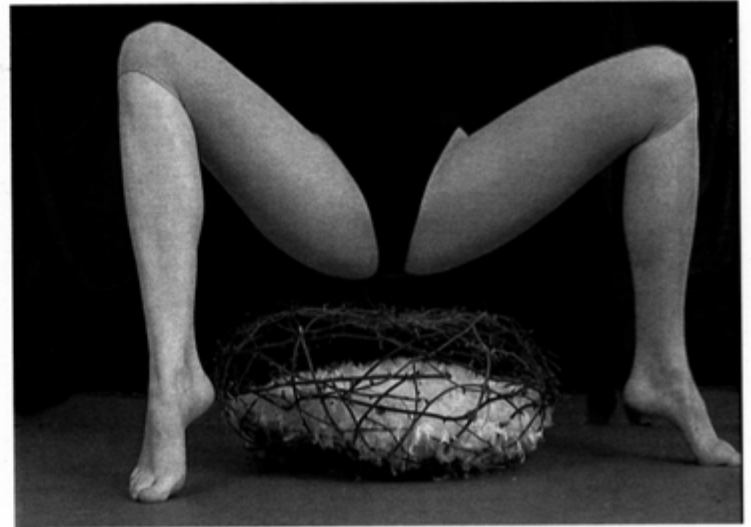
Installation: mixed media prints, hand dyed fabric, found rocks, styrofoam.
Dimensions variable

Julianne Gadoury

I am making an effort through art to capture and translate my reactions to social forces and happenings. Somewhere between the raw emotion of reacting to behaviors that affect humanity and the meditative repetitive action of art making, an artwork is produced that is a residue of both these events. Through creation, I am better able to understand abstract social relationships and reconstruct their meanings through my imagination and the individual marks that my hand, eye, and brain enjoy and are trained to make. For me, art is not a spectacle, but a gift of expression necessary to any society that has a concern for the quality of life of its members. www.juliannegadoury.com



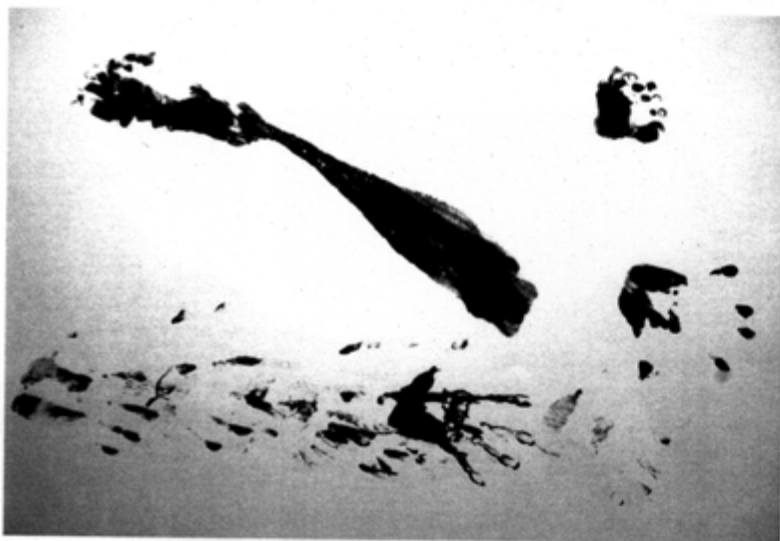
Breath Fed Hearts Bled (detail), 2008-2009
Ceramic and encaustic



Synaptic Weaving, 2009
DV Performance, 4 minutes
Woven meditation cushion: briars and down

Elizabeth Dee Heifferon

A nomad, settling for a time to live and create at the edge of the sea, I contain the desert from which I came. I am always outwardly in motion in order to maintain an inner calm: collecting, constructing, shaping, suspending. In my process, I break free of my Self; through a dynamic exchange, I embody the rhythm of my material, bending and flowing with every nuance of its being, in order to reach a new becoming. The spaces and systems I create contain the energy of these primal interactions. I seek to express a fundamental unity through a visual harmony.



Haunting, 2009
Lithograph



Haunting, 2009
Mixed media installation

Kristine Granger

I am interested in the psychological and physiological imprints that memory carries. The elasticity of our beings: when one has been stretched so far, what are the affects, or if there is a repeated pattern, can it be broken by perseverance of self? My work communicates my personal and emotional state in relation with the surrounding world as I have experienced it. I investigate what makes us, the moments in our lives where events or individuals have made an imprint, handprint, or shadow. These pivotal moments that change you for the rest of your life; moments where personal decisions are made and their effects felt. My work derives from very personal events but I believe the work's strength is that there is the shared experience in evocation and the experience that is created at that moment.



Ham and Her Father, 2009

Video, 7:20 minutes



Untitled Video Stills, 2009

Digital print, 11 x 14

Danielle Rago

My work discusses identity, sexuality, gender, and body politics from a deeply personal perspective. This tension between the personal and political is meant to enrich the work with layers of complexity, challenging viewers to engage outside of their comfort zone. From a political standpoint, the work has a queer, feminist slant. But the personal aspects of the work are often much darker and more difficult to define. Shame, aggression, fear, and self-loathing manifest themselves in myriad ways, offering questions with no real answers, and problems with no clear solutions. Slippery and ambiguous, these questions and problems excite and fascinate me, and fuel the energy from which I produce my work.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to Professor Anita Moskowitz, Chairperson of the Department of Art; Associate Professor Stephanie Dinkins, MFA Program Director; and Associate Professor Christa Erickson for their assistance with this exhibition.

The 2009-2010 University Art Gallery exhibition schedule is made possible by a generous grant from the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation. Additional funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Friends of Staller Center. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping us present our exhibitions to our students and faculty as well as to the local and regional community.

I also want to express my appreciation to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Pat Moran, Pete Pantaleo, and Christian Routh, for exhibition assistance; Wanda Chen, Sung Cho, Amanda Corrigan, Clara Kim, Sujin Lim, Peggy Lung, Larissa Rusinak, Ed Suh, Erica Travis, and Yoong-ju Yoon, Gallery Interns; Mariko Aoyagi and Allison Conley, Gallery Assistants; Liz Silver, Staller Center Production Manager; Liz Lamendola, Technical Director, and the Staller Center Technical Crew for exhibition lighting; Amanda Meyers Wasserman, Staller Center Director of Development, for Gallery fundraising; and Aubrey Szczygiel, Gallery Secretary.

Most of all, I want to thank Joseph Andrew Esser, Julianne Gadoury, Kristine Granger, Elizabeth Dee Heifferon, and Danielle Rago for a very exciting MFA exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper
Director

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