

cute & CREEPY



Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts

Front cover details from the artworks
of participating artists appear in the
following order: [top] Greg Simkins;
[bottom left to right] Laurie Hogin; Chris
Mars; Laurie Lipton; Kris Kuksi; Ray
Caesar.

Program Sponsors: The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Arts & Humanities Enhancement Program of Florida State University Award to Carrie Ann Baade, Art Department, the City of Tallahassee State Partners Initiative and the Leon County Cultural Development Program, both administered by the Council on Culture and Art.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS • Florida State University
College of Visual Arts, Theatre & Dance

October 14 - November 20, 2011

REVIATORY MONSTERS • Nancy E. Hightower

CARRIE ANN BADE
GUEST CURATOR



cute & CREEPY

CURATOR'S NOTE

With the recent and publicly-celebrated exhibitions of Tim Burton at MOMA and Edward Gorey at the Wadsworth Athenaeum, now is the time to revel in the genre of the macabre. This work is cute and it's creepy...it's what I like about contemporary art.

After growing up wondering whether all the great art had already been made, I feel there are more amazing artists working now than ever before.

Over the past six years, I have exhibited with the artists taking part in this show or have discovered their work through attending their exhibitions. It's been such a pleasure to see the rise of this wave of dark art and the Pop Surrealists that this exhibition promotes.

To see beauty in the carnivalesque or macabre, in freaks and in monsters, is a matter of aesthetics. Most of us can agree on the artistic value of a Monet or Titian but this work is for a daring audience, an audience open to exploring the strange beauty and the ecstasy inherent in our culture's aversions.

There is something that makes us uneasy when confronted by the weird or the unusual. Those who can appreciate both have come to anticipate and enjoy unexpected sensations. Work of this nature is not going to be an underground movement any longer: the grotesque is going mainstream.

Carrie Ann Baade
Department of Art
Florida State University

Title Page. Details from the artworks of artists on the title page appear in the following order, left to right, top to bottom: Judith Schaechter; Marion Peck; Martin Wittfooth; Kathie Olivas; Greg Simkins; Mark Hosford; Timothy Cummings; Heidi Taillefer; Christian Rex Van Minnen; Elizabeth McGrath; Richard A. Kirk; Ray Caesar; Travis Louie; Laurie Lipton; Kris Kuksi; Chris Mars; Chet Zar; Jessica Joslin; Laurie Hogin; Lori Field; Kate Clark; Thomas Woodruff; Scott G. Brooks; Kelly Boehmer.

SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATION

The exhibition CUTE & CREEPY was organized by the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts in concert with Guest Curator Carrie Ann Baade, Art Department, College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance. Project Staff: Allys Palladino-Craig, Grantwriter / Editor; Jean Young, Registrar and Fiscal Officer; Teri Yoo, Communications Officer; Viki D. Thompson Wylder, Educational Programming; Wayne Vonada, Chief Preparator; Dalia Grad, Editorial Assistant.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 1970, in a brand new building, the Museum first opened its doors as the Fine Arts Gallery, run by faculty from the visual arts. Eventually that administrative model was left behind in order to concentrate holdings of the permanent collection and to increase the impact of an ambitious programme of exhibitions with a consuming calendar of events. Forty years on, in 2011, the Museum of Fine Arts has a record of published scholarship and is accredited by the American Association of Museums, while it has never once lost sight of the vigor of its original relationships: and so it is with great pride that we present the guest curatorial project of Carrie Ann Baade, a faculty member in painting in the Department of Art.

Carrie arrived at Florida State University charged with enthusiasm (which she has never lost despite the endless details required in curating an exhibition). From her arrival in 2007, Carrie was in possession of knowledge of a stratum of painters and sculptors whose adept use of pictorial naturalism is the armature beneath convincing, yet subversive, visions of reality. In this endeavor, she has collaborated with writer Nancy E. Hightower, at the University of Colorado, whose essay "Revelatory Monsters" is both spirited and wise.

Carrie's sense of humor and her sense of the absurd were both at play in her proposal submitted to peers at the University in order to win an Arts & Humanities Program Enhancement Grant from the Council on Research and Creativity. With that success as leverage, the Museum wrote additional external grants for amenities of the project.

There is always a flurry of activity — and students — around Carrie. For several seasons she has not only worked in her studio, taught classes, but also been a prime mover in a beloved alternate space, the 621 Gallery of Railroad Square. Carrie is a generous supporter of other artists, a painter of rare talent, herself, and a vivacious colleague.

The Museum of Fine Arts takes great pleasure in welcoming audiences to Carrie Ann Baade's *Cute & Creepy*.

Allys Palladino-Craig
Director, MoFA
Florida State University



Carrie Ann Baade, *Joy and Sorrow*, 2011, oil on copper, 12 inches diameter.

Revelatory Monsters

DECONSTRUCTIVE HYBRIDS, THE GROTESQUE, AND POP SURREALISM

We need monsters in our lives.

We like to fear them, to run hiding under the covers or clenching a lover's arm until the monster is destroyed or banished to far off lands. They are wonderful like that, refusing to ever completely disappear from our lives, affording us the opportunity for self-introspection if we take a moment to recognize that monsters don't die because they are essentially *us* (Cohen 5). Once they are eradicated from our cultural memory, we go, too. And that monstrous, wondrous body is at the heart of the grotesque, too. From the playful *grotteschi* unearthed in the Domus Aurea to demons of the illuminated manuscripts that overflowed from the margins onto the actual text, the monstrous body has always threatened what our culture has desired to contain (or perhaps more accurately, trapped, vetted, and fixed to incorporate whatever impossible standards it has set up to differentiate *us* from *them*). But the monstrous body is also prophetic in nature.

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues that as a "construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically 'that which reveals' that which warns...like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself" (4). What sets up this kind of fulcrum is society itself: "The too-precise laws of nature as set forth by science are gleefully violated in the freakish compilation of the monster's body. A mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, demanding instead a 'system' allowing polyphony, mixed response (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction), and resistance to integration..." (7). These kinds of juxtapositions are what form the definition of the grotesque.

The grotesque, however, is not a thing in itself. It's not a genre or trope or an "ism" that can be qualified by a time period. It is an operation, a process that occurs when one is caught in between a moment of humor and horror, or horror and beauty—held in perfect suspension so that neither overrides the other. We are left in momentary paralysis, unsure of what to think, unable to look away. It is within that space, Geoffrey Galt Harpham argues, that the grotesque can cause "the death of the theorizing mind, the temporary reign of the senses (or, more accurately, the confusion of theory), followed by a resurrection of theoretical certainty," (17). This paradigm crisis happens only at a point in time when there is enough discontinuity to "discredit an old explanatory paradigm or model," yet no new system or paradigm has been fully adopted yet to put the subject back into sense of ease (17). I would add that the grotesque, then, operates within the field of rhetoric, as a *persuasive* act which, because it rests upon the intersection of humor and horror, utilizes pathos (appeal to emotion) rather than logos (appeal to logic) or ethos (appeal to authority).

This is a critical distinction to make, for the grotesque never transgresses merely for shock value, or as Flannery O'Connor argues "This is not the kind of distortion that destroys; it is the kind that reveals, or should reveal" (162). Just what, exactly, this art reveals depends upon the binaries it seeks to playfully challenge, for no distortion can occur without some concept of the ideal. Harpham believes that much of the grotesque is "marked by such an affinity/antagonism, by the co-presence of the normative, fully formed, 'high' or ideal, and the abnormal, unformed, degenerate, 'low' or material" (9). Citing Leonardo's "grotesque heads" sketches, he describes them as "Barely but recognizably human, they grade toward some species lower down on the evolutionary or ontological scale, toward a principle of formlessness, primitivism, or bestiality. The result is a compromise, a taboo, a non-thing" (9). These monsters, then, must play by a semblance of rules—they cannot totally be unrecognizable—there must be something familiar about them, an uncanny place of remembrance, in order for the grotesque to work. This is not an arbitrary distinction. As Philip Thomson asserts, "the grotesque world, however strange, is yet our world, real and immediate, which makes the grotesque so powerful" (23). Grotesque *monstrum* cannot be easily dismissed as the world of fantasy or science fiction—those realms of once upon a time or a time yet to be—where we suspend our disbelief. The grotesque wants us to come with all our beliefs held tightly in our doubled-up fists. The tighter we hold, the more power the grotesque has to play with our boundaries.

The grotesque body must also resist any kind of narrative closure. Bakhtin states that the

carnavalesque body is one that is “always becoming. It is never finished, never completed: it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body” (317). This wondrous body belongs to “the people”—not to those in power: “The body that figures in all the expressions of the unofficial speech of the people is the body that fecundates and is fecundated, that gives birth and is born, devours and is devoured, drinks, defecates, is sick and dying” (319). It is the vehicle for transgressive laughter, that which frees us from the fear of dogma. In part, this why the grotesque—and all the other tropes and movements for which it can be an umbrella term—deals with representational art as opposed to the abstract or conceptual. It is rooted in this world and life, rooted in what we are familiar with. Otherwise, we cannot experience the categorical confusion that is at the heart of any paradigm shift (Harpham 17).

While the grotesque has existed since early Western civilization, relatively little scholarly study has been given to it. The few authors cited have worked steadily to gain acknowledgement for the grotesque in the academic world, but it has been mainly the argument of English professors or fiction writers. It was a welcomed sight to see Frances Connelly’s *Modern Art and the Grotesque* from the University of Cambridge Press (2003) and Robert Storr’s show *Disparities and Deformations: Our Grotesque* (2004). Also in 2004, Kirsten Anderson’s *Pop Surrealism: The Rise of Underground Art* showcased the kitschy side of the grotesque—that bricolage of our culture repackaged in bright colors—even as it critiqued the darker aspects of the American Dream.

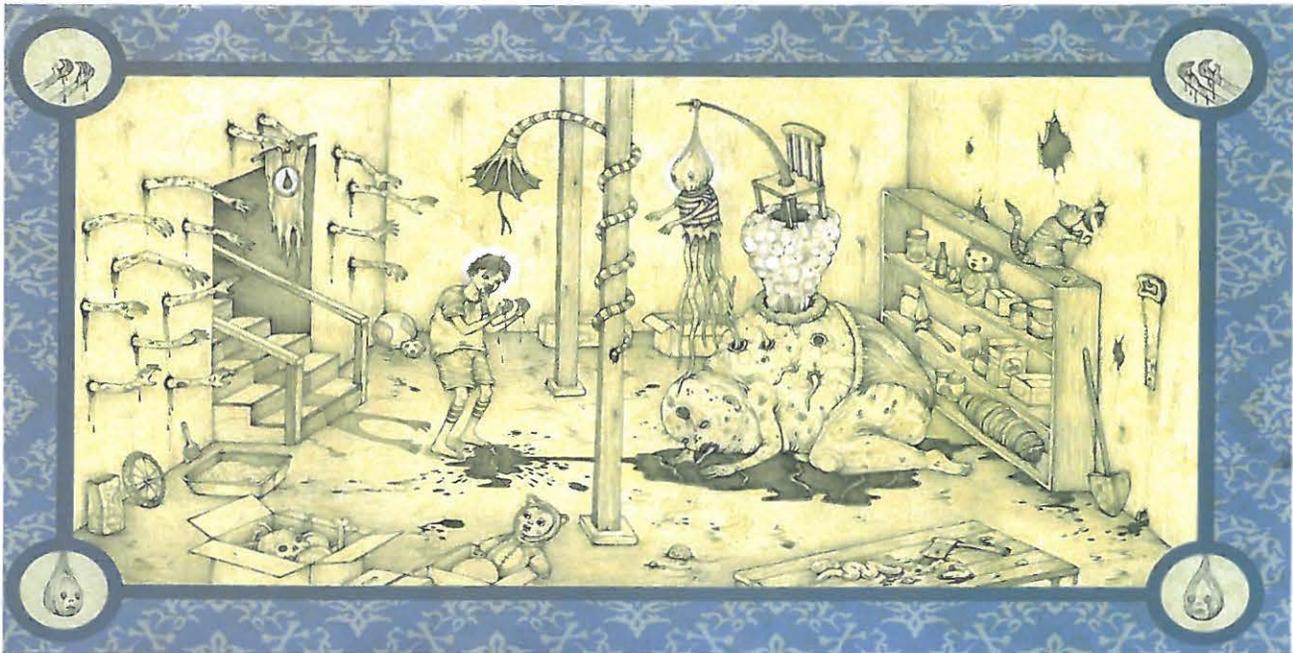
The artists gathered for this exhibition bring in more traditional aspects of the grotesque into their work: the carnivalesque, macabre, hybrids and freaks, and monstrosity. In the past ten years, we have seen a rise in reality TV, social networking, texting—a mediated, plastic culture that is desperate to be called back into the beauty of the real body, into our animal selves that decay and in turn fertilize new life. *Cute and Creepy* represents a richer, darker, more joyous examination of the injustices and hypocrisies of a society which boasts of its freedom from the rooftops and out every satellite dish. The playfulness and apprehension of pop surrealism still coexist but with more aggressive intent to make us question what we know to be “true.” It is doubtful whether this kind of art will ever be mainstream—indeed, I wonder if it would then disassemble the very nature of its essence, which is to question every false, culture-constructed boundary we create. It might be that monsters only do their prophetic work if they stay on the edge of our dreams and waking lives, just waiting to shock us into a different kind of reality

The Carnavalesque

Greg Simkins’s acrylic works might seem at first to belong in the camp of pop surrealism rather than the grotesque, yet his carnivalesque bodies overpower whatever dreamscape we want to take refuge in. Here, the adorable creatures are morphed into multiple and multiplied bodies so that none can be named or categorized, a hallmark of the grotesque: “The interval of the grotesque is the one in which, although we have recognized a number of different forms in the object, we have not yet developed a clear sense of the dominant principle that defines it and organizes it into various elements....Resisting closure, the grotesque object impales us on the present moment, emptying the past and forestalling the future” (Harpham 16). Simkins’ bodies overflow with other body parts erupting from different orifices. We cannot tell if one creature is puking, devouring,



[above] Greg Simkins, *The Puppet Pathos*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 54 x 60 inches.



or giving birth to another in *The Puppet Pathos*; it is a Bakhtinian world, overtly transgressive, uncomfortably funny. The horrific wide eye in the corner warns us of the impending danger of being devoured or destroyed by some old world leviathan while the creature in the center of the work reads aloud an edict. Could it be the judgment of the way we have misappropriated the use of our oceans? *The Wilder Beast* has a similar critique in its disarray of body parts—a pair of bulbous eyes frame an equally bulging nose made of a turkey's body (with hooves instead of talons) that moves jarringly and sinuously into

a mountain goat. We double back, and now see the turkey body as the torso, and the eyes are wheels, churned by smaller creatures that may be birds or lizards—there is no consensus. This steampunk-like vehicle sinks into an abject space that is neither mechanical nor the solid organic structure of the goat or turkey; or perhaps this fleshy mass, given its proximity, is giving birth to the mechanical. In the distance, a skull's head forms part of the snowy mountain-side, contrasting with the vitality of movement in the foreground. Even that energy is threatened by the cliff that leads off into dead space at the lower right. There is joyous wonder in the fantastic even as the relationship between technology, nature, and evolution is troubled.

Mark Hosford's work calls to mind Bruegel's *Children's Games* or *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*. Irreverent, transgressive, and just a little too much fun, his graphite and gesso drawing *Bloody Nose Basement* presents us with a disturbing view of childhood. The young teenager with the bloody nose is easily understood, and we might even laugh at the memories of our own cuts and bruises, until we realize how

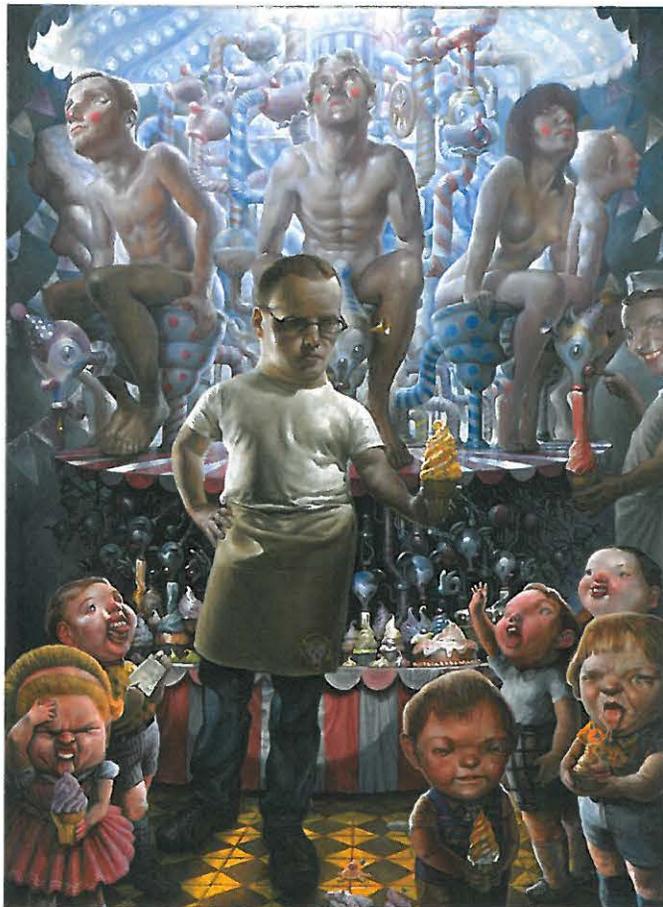
the boy is caught in between greater violence. To his left, arms jut out, reminding us, perhaps, of Wes Craven's *The People Under the Stairs*. To his right, a giant mutant baby who is licking up a larger



[top] Mark Hosford, *Bloody Nose Basement*, graphite, gesso, archival inkjet, 12.5 x 19.5 inches. [bottom] Heidi Taillefer, *Some Pig*, 2007, oil on panel, 16 x 20 inches.

puddle of blood slowly inches toward him. Just what created that puddle the baby is crawling in? Something that looks akin to a child wrapped tightly in a shroud or cocoon lies on the bottom shelf just behind the baby. In the foreground, almost off scene, lies a hatchet and the remains of offal on a wooden table. The childhood toys—soccer ball, stuffed animals (yet with human faces) are not enough to comfort us in light of the box of skull and bones. The most fantastic element within the pieces is also the smallest—snake like creature wrapped around the middle post (perhaps an allusion to *A Garden of Earthly Delights*)—hangs poised with forked tongue. We are not sure whether it is sniffing the boy's blood, or if it was the thing that gave him the bloody nose. Our laughter is generated by the ridiculousness of the scene, yet our horror cannot be diminished at the violence that threatens the young victim, out of sight from any parent. Even more disturbing, we cannot tell what is real, and what is imagined—what threatens from without, and what has been generated from within.

Both Heidi Taillefer and Scott Brooks take aim at our gluttonous, industrialized culture. Taillefer's *Some Pig* subverts the childhood classic, as blue ribboned animal churns out its meats, the organic and mechanized forever welded together. The flip of inside/outside would point to a carnivalesque body, but one that has been relegated to modes of consumer production (even the fertile breasts of Diana are only strapped on, denying any connection with true fertility and life). Scott Brooks satiric *Food Chain* is yet more disturbing, and is one of the truly grotesque pieces in this exhibition. The



boy on the lower left with the dollar is almost lecherous in his desire for an ice cream cone, oblivious to how the other children are reacting. A circus carousel is now a funhouse factory, the mouths of Disney-like characters becoming the conduits for human waste. It takes a moment for the true horror to set in—we are bedazzled by too many colors and patterns, too busy mocking the poor fools on the toilets before understanding how much this piece indicts the adults of this generation for polluting the next (not that the upcoming generation looks all that innocent).

Kelly Boehmer's plush sculptures present us with a luscious spilling over of carnivalesque death and life. In *Peace Dove*, the symbolic fowl lies limp on a birdhouse, a yolk-like substance trailing from one end, while from its neck bursts forth

[top] Kelly Boehmer, *Peace Dove*, 2007, mixed media, 12 x 12 x 10 feet. Photo credit: Tim Clancy. [bottom] Scott G. Brook, *Food Chain*, 2009, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches.

Nancy E. Hightower

[top] Kris Kuksi, *A New Divinity*, 2007, mixed media assemblage, 36 x 36 x 9.5 inches. [bottom] Laurie Lipton, *Death and the Maiden*, 2005, pencil on paper, 17 x 13 1/2 inches.



entrails of yarn and puppet parts. We cannot escape the lifeless stare or limp form of the giant dove, yet still it teems with transgressive life, even in its decay.

The Macabre

I have admired Laurie Lipton's work for many years now as my students become instant fans of her satiric pencil and charcoal drawings. In these portraits she draws close to Goya's *Caprichos*, which exposed children abuse, superstition, and the inquisitional violence of the church. It is her macabre drawings, though, that draw closer to the true nature of the grotesque, for there is something more interstitial about these skeletons—violent, laughable, tender, and searing in their cultural critique. Lipton's *Death and the Maiden* takes the traditional trope of Death assaulting a beautiful woman and inverts it by having Death wearing a nightdress and cradling a girl in bed (while eluding any overt nod to Faulkner's grotesque tale "A Rose for Emily"). Death is no longer the masculinized predator out to violently steal a young woman's innocence; instead, *she* nuzzles the girl, wrapping her arms comfortingly, protectively around her. It is too close a proximity for a culture such as ours that is hell bent on not dying, or even acknowledging mortality. Despite all our surgeries and eye creams and pills, Death remains close, a night time companion that cradles us anyway.

Kris Kuksi's work, like his 2007 *Decision* brings us back to the brilliance of Hans Holbein's *Dance of Death* laced with the delicate alien details of HR Giger. He presents death not as mere horror, but madcap adventure, waiting to be rebirthed from its embryonic sac. This is the essence of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, the pull back

into decay, not in disgust, but in joyous acknowledgment that such is where new life is fertilized. Its very spine is the backbone of civilization while a Bosch-like microcosm resides in its pelvis. We can see that Death is uncomfortable—it doesn't fit so well with one leg hanging outside the circle, the other bent up over its body in an odd angle. Yet Death's total attention is to the cityscape inside, hands poised both over and under the main tower. The hands make us question whether Death will destroy the tower that has grown too big for such a small womb, or protect it a little longer. Either way, the town's life is dependent upon Death's decision.

The sculptures of Jessica Joslin fall certainly into the realm of cute and creepy. Despite the fact that her macabre creations are derived from animal bones, their big eyes and animal playfulness keep us entranced. Until we get to *Rudolph*, from her Brass and Bone series. Between the black almond shaped eye and the carnivorous teeth, our friendly reindeer is now mounted on the wall as trophy instead of pulling Santa's sleigh. It could be a prophetic warning against demonizing difference or a reminder of how we destroy that which we love best in the animal kingdom.

Liz McGrath's *Truth Decay* has it in for the Tooth Fairy. More like a zombie Tooth Fairy. In one sense, the sculpture embodies all the fears and pain we've endured at the dentist's office. In another, it is a sharp critique of the church—those who would crucify the innocent and magical—all in the name of truth. What adds a level of disconcerting humor to the piece are the muppet like creatures buried with the fairy. They have pulled her bony arms off, their mouths open in muppet surprise. The animal remains surrounding the cross also hint that she is buried now—but therein lies an even stranger jest. One has to wonder what that grotesque resurrection would look like—an armless Tooth Fairy rising from the grave just to set the record straight on which mythological creatures do or don't exist.



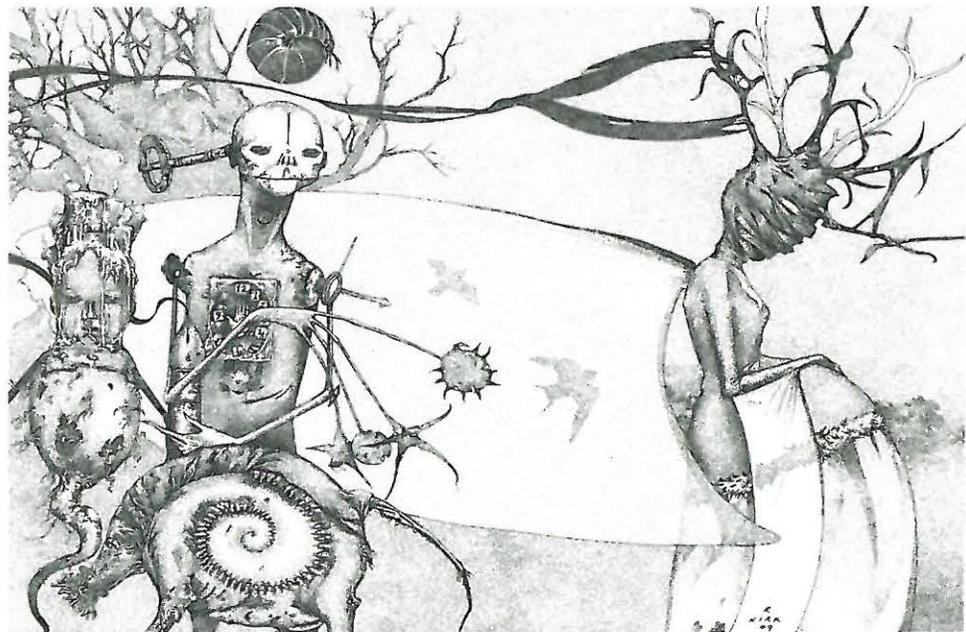
[top] Elizabeth McGrath, *Truth Decay*, 2005, wood, resin, acrylic paint, 52 x 72 inches. [bottom] Jessica Joslin, *Rudolph*, 2010, antique hardware and findings, brass horn, bone, antlers, beads, silver, vestment trip, glove leather, glass eyes, 17 x 10 x 13 inches.



Hybrids, Freaks, and Menageries

Travis Louie's Sam the Krampus subverts the typical representation of this mythological creature, St. Nicholas' dark cohort, who is normally much crueler, his tongue hanging out in perverse desire while he whips or steals bad children away. Louie's Krampus demonstrates the same function, and "descend[s] upon the wicked and selfish." At "three feet tall," he is an unassuming monster, and so must carry a stepladder to enact his punishments, which includes a transgressive practical joke: "Once he has his hands over the person's eyes he whispers in a very convincing woman's voice, when they turn around, they usually are frightened into unconsciousness. At which time, he cross-dresses his victims . . . affixing crooked wigs to their heads and miss-matched high heels to their feet (usually 2 left feet), and places them in uncomfortable locations where they might be seen by the most people, like a train stations or bus terminal" (Louie). The picture that accompanies this narrative includes a hairy, unassuming beast with large, yet feminine hands, and long fingernails. The monster's hair frames the man's head and shoulders and is of the same texture of the man's beard, alluding to the interconnectedness of this transgendered other. Curiously, the beast's eyes are not looking down at his intended victim, but straight at the viewer, unemotional and blank, as if in warning that perhaps we are next.

Throw Tim Burton into an apocalyptic Wonderland, and you have Richard Kirk's *The Dust Mill*. Despite its being firmly centered in the fantastic, there is enough reality here to hold us in a state of ambiguity, for surely that is a pregnant woman who takes up the right frame of the work, her cape merely fanning out instead of being wings. Or is it? The head



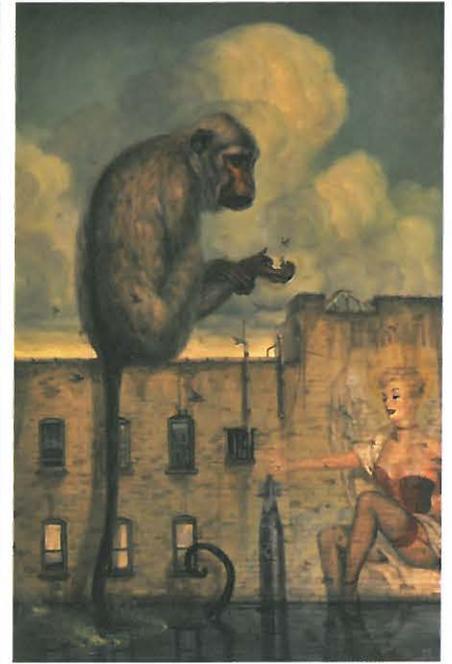
[top] Travis Louie, *Guess Who*, 2007, acrylic on board, 11 x 14 inches. [bottom] Richard A. Kirk, 2009, *The Dust Mill*, ink on paper, 12 x 9 inches.

[facing page top, left to right] Martin Wittfooth, 2010, *Tempest*, oil on linen, 60 x 48 inches, and Martin Wittfooth, 2009, *Messengers*, oil on panel, 36 x 24 inches. [facing page, bottom] Lori Field, *Do You Like My Hat?*, 2007, colored pencil, rice paper, thread, encaustic on panel, 12 x 12 inches.

that is wrapped, actually bound, in bark must be suffocating. Unless that *is* her head, and those too thin arms are branches. The clock man to the left threatens the delicate wings with sharp instruments that are not weapons, merely a part of him. Of time. Of death, given how bare this magical landscape is. The melted candles ooze wax down the one truly human face, attached to a potato spud body and animal tail. It is neither animal nor vegetable. Humans only have a small part in this world, where all things eventually die.

Lori Field's work brings us into the world of fantastic hybrids. Her *Do You Like My Hat?* reminds us of the photomontages of the Hannah Hoch, one of Dada artists in the Weimer Republic who created works that questioned her society's rigid constructions of gender. Field's paintings reveal similar concerns, albeit with a more ethereal aesthetic. The girl is young enough to yearn the adorable kind of short dresses to show off panties, but her face is older—perhaps still not quite old enough to give birth. The embryonic sac sprouting out of her head is an ornamental value—no longer lodged in the center of her being. The boy who hikes up his skirt to show an expanse of thigh, eyes closed, one might assume, as he wishes for the barren pelvis on his head to birth similar life. His colored hand wings might be a consolation prize in this fanciful world.

Martin Wittfooth's *Messengers* and *Tempest* create a grotesque tension with giant monkeys on top of rusted building structures that no longer herald Western civilization. The feminine ideal, which helped tame the beast in King Kong, is now reduced to a pin-up model painted on the side, holding or blowing a phallic shaped piece of machinery. We would laugh at the crude sexual joke except for the



Nancy E. Hightower



apocalyptic nature of the scene—the tornados in the distance in *Tempest* and the rising floodwaters of *Messengers*—keep us intrigued in a fixed state of confusion.

Kate Clark's sculptures echo of Patricia Piccinini's disturbing installations such as *The Young Family*; both artists care deeply about the life around us and use grotesque hybrids in order for us to reexamine that "thing" we call nature. Clark's *Pack* presents us with a coyote clan that refuses to be labeled solely as predator with such human faces, the eyes a shocking blue. The lack of expression is particularly jarring since the viewer can no longer ascribe any emotion to the creature (the way one normally can upon seeing a human or perhaps a snarling animal). These creatures simply are both *us* and *them* in ridiculously, uncanny combination, and they ask that we leave them be.

Laurie Hogin's animals are colorful, vibrant creatures that comment upon America's capitalistic lifestyle, and all the trappings it brings. Take *A Song of Retail*: suffused in pale hot pink and peach tones, the monkey's aqua eyes stare straight at the viewer as its opens its mouth to sing. But the razor sharp teeth and skull as percussion instrument bring in a sense of deathly kitsch. It would be considered simply surreal if it did not hold a stark truth to

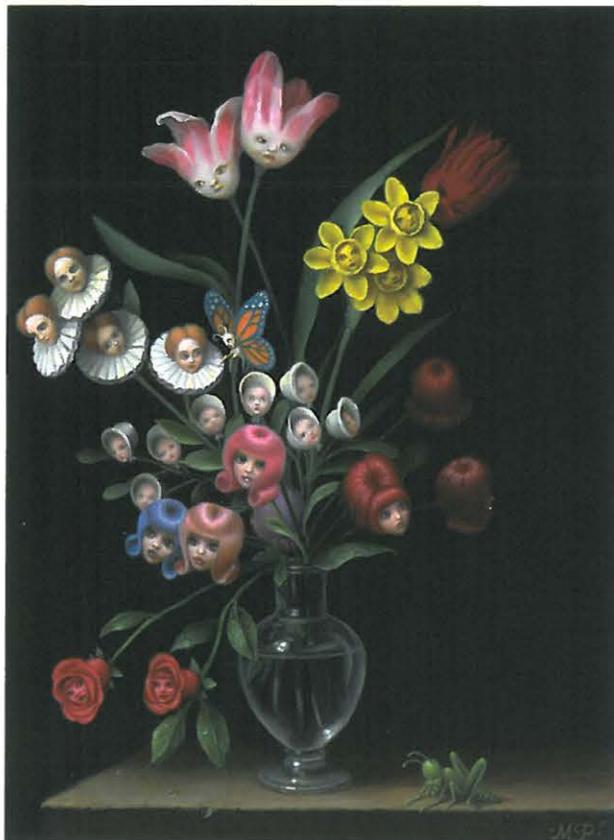


[top] Kate Clark, *Pack*, 2007, coyote hides, foam, clay, pins, thread, rubber eyes, wood, cardboard, 66 x 44 x 92 inches. Collection of the David Roberts Art Foundation, London. [bottom] Laurie Hogin, *Song of Retail #1 (Pink Skull Monkey)*, 2004, oil on panel, 19 x 19 inches.

it—monkeys are violent creatures—we know their potential for harm. This reality then imbues the title with aspects of sadism that is unnerving to the viewer

Marion Peck's *Bouquet* is similar in content and theme to Hogan's piece. The pink tones throughout lend an aura of fun, coupled with an *Alice in Wonderland* feel. Here are the talking flowers that Alice must have encountered, yet they have been cut off from their gardens and become the merely ornamental—to be gazed at as objects. From the Elizabethan ruffs to the bonnets to the bouffant, we see that this has been occurring for hundreds of years—and here they sit, forever frozen in the masculine gaze.

Kathie Olivas' *Rivals* encode the "cute" status of children with the creepiness of Tod Browning's *Freaks*. Unlike the sideshow characters that told Cleopatra she could become "one of us!" in a triumphant chant, these masked children band together against a forlorn landscape. Their animal masks will do little to hide the fact that two are practically ghosts already. Still, they stand together, in true carnival fashion, bedecked in festive costumes of blue, orange and red that belie the muted violence of carnivorous teeth and eyeless sockets. Is it the world that threatens to



[top] Kathie Olivas, *Rivals*, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches. [bottom] Marion Peck, *Bouquet*, 2007, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches.



tear them apart, or each other?

Thomas Woodruff work recalls the glorious ornamental grotesques of the Nero's Domus Aurea. *The Sun*, an acrylic work on black silk velvet, is almost six square feet and turns by motor. While the sun is the technically the center of the painting, like the embellishments that decorated the sides of the illuminated manuscripts, the grotesque heads that constantly turn change into hilarious and subtly terrifying images—the frighten, suspicious man is now wise, old, and all seeing. Men morph into women, eyebrows raised in surprise. The creation of these “puzzles” where birthed, in part, from the news that one of Woodruff’s good friends was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s. Here Bakhtin’s topsy turvy world is healing salve through the clashing of binaries: “Where the hoi polloi meet and greet,/The wise and the naive,/The clairvoyant and the charmingly clueless, /The toughs and the meeks, /The clowns and the heroes, /The gossips and the cheats, The spinsters and the studs, /The satyrs and the staid... Beauties and beasts ... constantly turning/... not often learning ... trying then failing .../and warming with the heat.”

Judith Schaecter’s *Rape Serenade* disturbs us not because of its content. Most of the CSI and other forensic shows are predicated upon the sexual assault of women, and their ratings only continue to go up. How it is given consensus by the clown audience, expressing horror, joy, anger, lechery—too many faces so that we can only label them, perhaps, as *ourselves*.



[top] Thomas Woodruff, *The Sun*, 2008, acrylic gouache on linen heightened with 24-carat gold, 70 inches in diameter. [bottom] Judith Schaecter, *Rape Serenade*, 1990, stained glass, sandblasted, engraved, painted with vitreous paint, assembled with lead, copperfoil and exhibited in lightbox, 20 x 30 inches.

[facing page top] Christian Rex Van Minnen, *Manfungus Series 1.1*, 2007, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches. [bottom] Chris Mars, *VM-8: Neglect of the Maimed*, 2007, oil on panel, 22 x 26 inches.

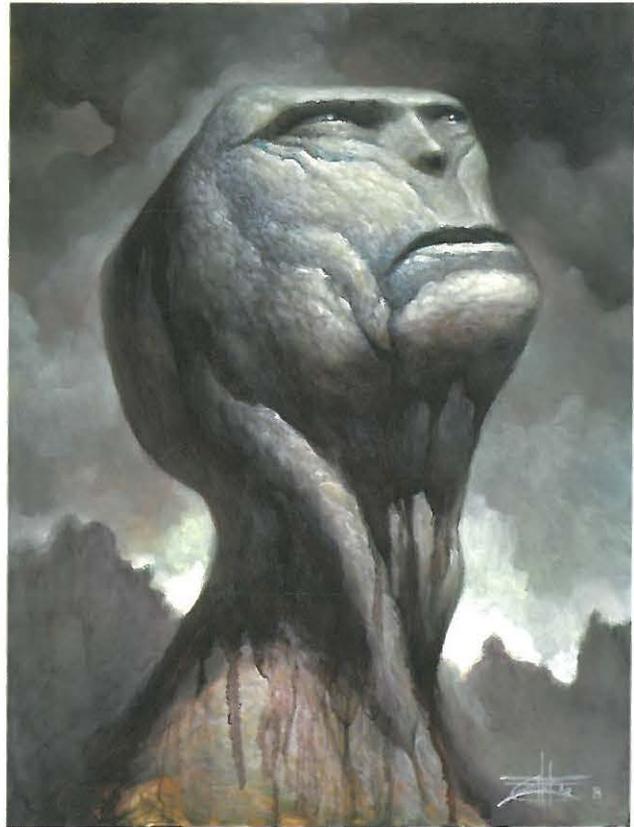
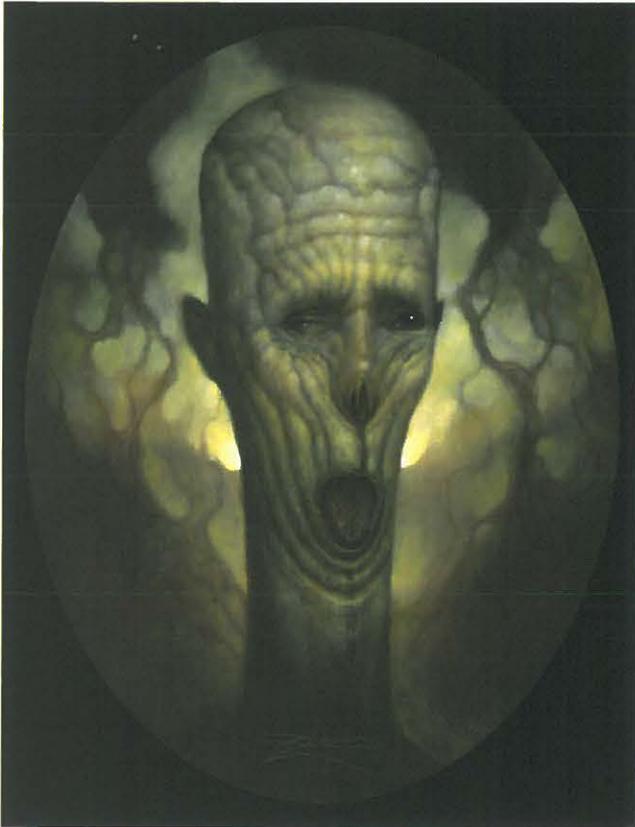
On the rapist/clown face we can read no enjoyment, only confused compulsion (this is reinforced by the fool's cap that he wears). Is he acting from a misogynistic motivation, or simply obeying his audience's voyeuristic expectations? The alabaster white upon brown body brings in a racial otherness tied to the earth, since the darker contours of the woman's body draws attention to the rocks and cracks in the desolate landscape. Suddenly, this beautiful stained glass breathes new life into the old cliché of the "white" world raping the earth.

Christian Rex Van Minnen's still life portraits immediately bring to mind Arcimboldo's work, although Van Minnen takes a more surrealist approach, shifting delineated forms into the formless. Whereas in Arcimboldo, we see the hybrids between man and beast or vegetable, in Van Minnen's work such as *Manfungus Series 1.1*, they are neither. This anthropomorphic character pushes us back into the decayed life that feeds us as we try to make out the image of a shoulder, a possible mouth and nose base on crevices and bulges, but no other signifiers. And even more disturbingly, a tuft of human hair in the back, polluting the smooth, rubbery texture upon which our eyes had alighted. Mushrooms crawl up and out of the red linen draped across its chest. It is the human elements that seem out of place in this picture, not the fungus we so desperately try to erase from our homes and yards.

Monstrum

"Let me tell you something about Monsters," Mars writes on his website. "I have great empathy toward Monsters, or more accurately, Perceived Monsters. To me, Monsters are more like misfits, people who are physically deformed, or rather, uniquely formed (as indeed we all are, each of us); or, people who are mentally on a different plane than the majority. By this definition, might I be speaking even of you?" Mars' *Neglect of the Maimed* presents us with an assortment of wounded, their wounds bound up in shroud-like material so that at first we assume this is a graveyard. Yet the creature in the hazard suit to the left, his hand wrapped tightly around one victim's wrist, hints that this group is being rounded up for possible extermination (as evidenced by the suffused glow in the background. How could anyone not think of the concentration camp ovens?). Likewise, the lipstick stains on the mouth of the fore-ground figures bring to mind the story of liberated concentration camp survivors who received a shipment of lipstick instead of needed supplies. The center figure throws us deeper into ambiguity—is this wounded man being resurrected, like Lazarus, into a deeper nightmare of shame? His look of distrust is not directed towards the man in the hazard suit, but instead towards the bald woman in the right hand corner, the most blemish free of them all—perfect pouty lips and the cheek-





bones any model would envy. The center figure retains well-formed pecs and the v-shaped figure of a strong man, only to end in the amputation of his legs. The blood trickling from the woman's head and the missing arm tells us she is moving into the world of monsters—but we know that they were not created that way—someone did this to them, and there we as a culture stand doubly accused—for we don't merely discard the other—we help make them.

Special effects make-up artist Chet Zar is known for his love of horror, yet it is imbued with such pathos, that I wonder how much we can truly keep him confined to that camp. His monsters are so full of human feeling that we can only see a distorted mirror when gazing at them, such as the case in *Abandoned*, where a stone man looks up at the sky in disbelief—angry, vengeful, but utterly alone, his neck twisted in order to get one last glance at those who left him (whether that be family, his culture, or his god). But *Choke* is a different matter altogether, even though the title immediately signifies of violent death. The creature with elongated neck and face, disproportionately large cranium, might indeed be choking, as evidence from the smoke like shapes in the background and the bright blaze directly behind its head. But the swollen tongue is off, somehow, a little too bent at the tip so that it seems the monster is sticking his tongue out at the viewer, and perhaps telling them to *choke on it*. A subtle snub from the Other—that shriveled, cockeyed thing we've all demanded to be *not me*. The grotesque will take any boundary that we erect in order to feel superior and joyously transgress it in order that we might accept the unacceptable and become a kinder, gentler species.

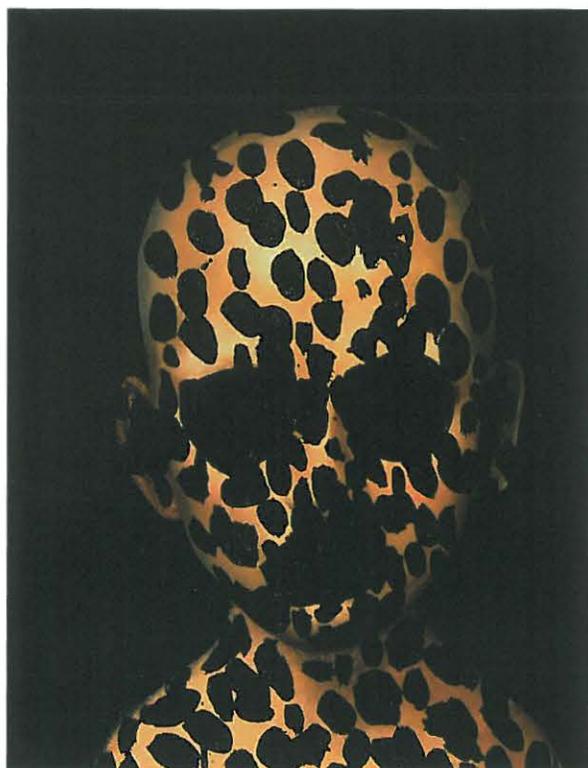
Ray Caesar's girls are unearthly, yet all too real, in part informed by his work at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. The Jonathan Levine Gallery describes Caesar's pieces as "grimly hopeful and gravely whimsical images of wizened children who radiate an enigmatic serenity." Such is the tenuous field of energy we encounter in Caesar's *Descent*. A beautiful girl floats down into an abyss, the top half looking like Marie Antoinette while the bottom half takes the form of the Lovecraftian Cthulhu. The light surrounding this creature is so bright we do not notice the spokes below poking out, and only on second glance do we see that it is a junkyard of domesticity—upside down baby carriage and dining chairs, a sewing machine—that threaten to impale her deli-

[left to right] Chet Zar, *Choke*, 2007, oil on canvas, 11 x 14 inches, and Chet Zar, *Abandoned*, 2008, oil on board, 12 x 16 inches.

cate tendrils. She is in a submerged amphitheater, watched by other aquatic creatures—their forms barely discernable. Are they watching to see if she will survive the impact of her “sex” that is not made for such a meeting?

Timothy Cummings’ acrylic *Spot Portrait* series brings to mind the dissection of the face thrust upon us by culture and medicine alike—a nip here and tuck there—while the child looks on with resignation or abject horror (perhaps at a society that will continue to disassemble him/her throughout life). Upon closer inspection, though, we see the scrawling of some madman and thus the children keep our gaze riveted through our pity to rescue them. That is, until we get to *Spot Portrait 17*, when the blacked out nose and eyes turn the child into some monster that is barely on the edge of our empathy. We fear the power of the thing now more than anything that has power over it. What does this say about all of the labels and markers painted over our children? Labels such as ADHD, hyperactive, depressed, stupid, gifted, smart, sissy boy, tomboy—all of those categories adults find so helpful in trying to understand a world they have long since left behind and have no desire to remember.

Monsters are powerful entities—they can be wondrous hybrids, which call us into the realm of the in-between, or they can be carnivalesque, that body which is always becoming, never finished. Others venture into the macabre, where death takes center stage yet defies the exoticism of the gothic. The works I labeled as “monstrum” in this show delve into the realm of horror while revealing the darkest violence committed against the voiceless and unseen victims. Such distortion has its own limitations, for the grotesque is not out to destroy



our subjectivity, but merely challenge it in way that we are offended and seduced at the same time. The artists in *Cute and Creepy* dare to use the grotesque within their work try to erase those boundaries by which we dismiss, erase, and hate others. It is an attitude of love and redemption, packaged in the bodies of the broken.

—N.E.H.

[top] Ra: Caesar, *Descent*, 2008, digital ultrachrome on paper, 72 x 48 inches.
[bottom] Timothy Cummings, *Spot Portrait*, 2001, acrylic on board, approximately 10 x 8 inches.

REVELATORY MONSTERS

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LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

The Artists

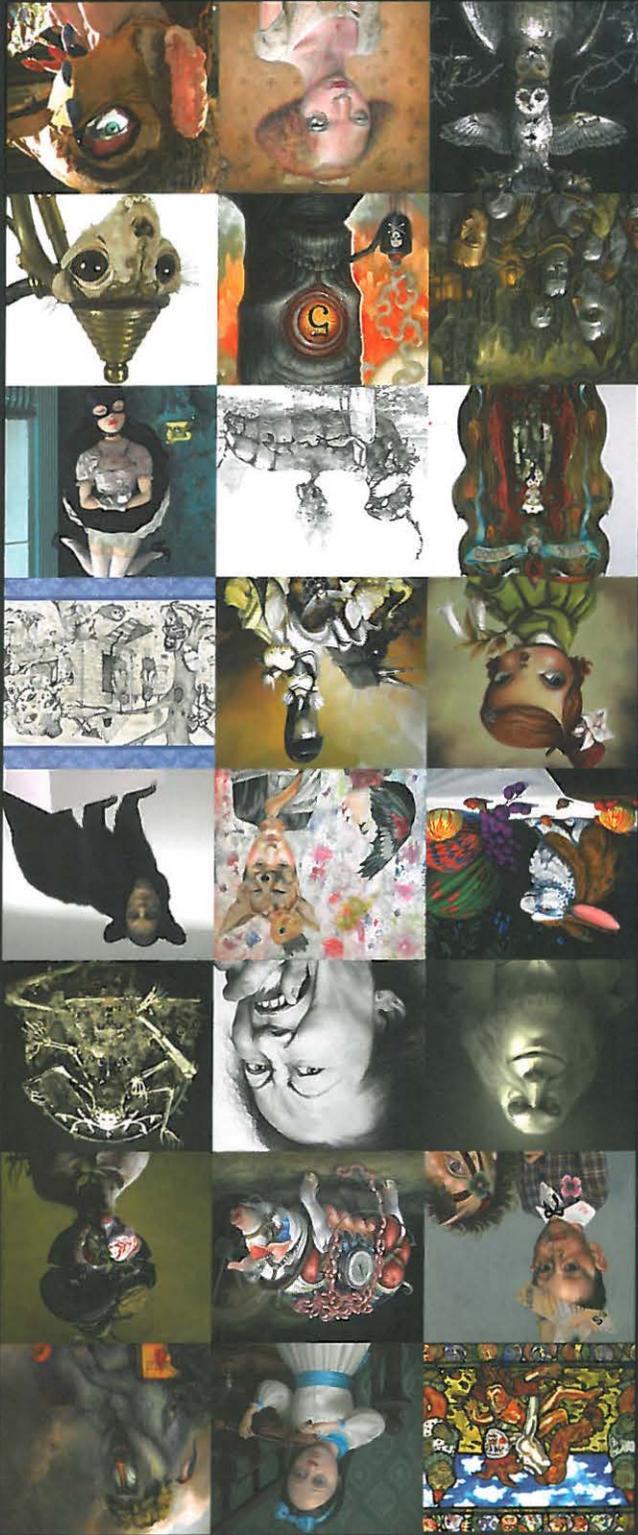
Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco
Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
CoproGallery, Santa Monica
Joshua Liner Gallery, New York
Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale
Merry Karnowsky, Los Angeles
Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York
Richard Goodall Gallery, Manchester
Roq la Rue, Seattle
Sloan Fine Art, New York

Nancy Hightower earned a Ph.D. in English with an emphasis on Creative Writing from the University of Denver. She currently teaches in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado where her classes focus on Writing in the Visual Arts, The Grotesque, and Business and Society, with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship. Her research focuses on all aspects of the grotesque in art, literature, and film, as well as art activism.

Nancy's fiction intersects with the visual arts as well. Her short story "In the Beginning" was published alongside Christian Hahn's work in the Denver Art Museum's 2009 *Embrace! Exhibition Catalogue, Volume II*. That same year, her story "Unleashed Beauty," was published in Beate Engl's catalogue *The Blob - Nothing can stop it!* Engl, a Berlin artist, used the 1950s science fiction motif of invasion to create an installation that critically analyzed the global art industry today. Her most recent pursuits include both writing essays on art and speaking. She was invited by Lia Chavez to be part of art-salon panel, "Looking Forward: Imagining a Creative Humanitarianism for This Generation of Artists" that was held at Affirmation Arts in New York City in November 2010. During that same week, she lectured on the grotesque in art in conjunction with an exhibit, *Another Roadside Attraction*, at ISE Cultural Foundation. In May 2011, she presented "Reinventing Goya's *Caprichos*: Cultural Critique for the 21st Century" at the Sixth International Conference on the Arts in Society, in Berlin, Germany.

Carrie Ann Baade is an internationally exhibiting artist whose surreal oil paintings are rich with allegorical meta-narratives inspired by literature and art history. She has been awarded the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowship, the Delaware Division of the Arts Fellowship for an Established Artist, and has been nominated for the prestigious United States Artist Fellowship. Exhibiting widely with the Pop Surrealists, she has had paintings featured in *Metamorphosis*, a survey of the top, contemporary Visionary Surrealists and her work will be included in the upcoming exhibit *Suggestivism* curated by Nathan Spoor at the Grand Central Art Center in California.

Baade received her Masters in Painting from the University of Delaware where she expanded her knowledge of materials and techniques under the guidance of professors of art conservation. She received her B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago that included one year of study at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy. Her work has been reviewed and the subject of features in the NY ARTS Magazine, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Austin Chronicle, the Colorado Springs Independent, the Albuquerque Journal, and Philadelphia Today. Recent solo exhibitions include: the Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, the Rosenfeld Gallery in Philadelphia, Billy Shire Fine Arts in Los Angeles, and the Ningbo Art Museum in China. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Painting and Drawing at Florida State University.



Kelly Boehmer

Scott G. Brooks

Ray Caesar

Kate Clark

Timothy Cummings

Lori Field

Laurie Hogin

Mark Hosford

Jessica Joslin

Richard A. Kirk

Kris Kuksi

Laurie Lipton

Travis Louie

Chris Mars

Elizabeth McGrath

Kathie Olivas

Marion Peck

Judith Schaechter

Greg Simkins

Heidi Taillefer

Christian Rex Van Minnen

Martin Witttooth

Thomas Woodruff

Chet Zar

KELLY BOEHMER



My work is about nostalgia. My goal is capturing the beauty and the absurdity that I find, while investigating stories connected to my personal history. I retell stories from religion, fairy tales, and personal experience. Fears of death are reduced to silly scenarios with taxidermy and soft sculpture animals. When looking back to the grunge rock bands that I listened to, I lament the loss of the teenage angst and fantasies that are now replaced by adult feelings of anxiety.

I want the work to have a childlike appearance that is both pitiful and magical. Seductive colors and textures are used to entice the viewer, but they are then reminded of the base things that connect us as humans by seeing the piss, puke, and feces.

All of my objects are sewn and knotted together by hand, reflecting my closeness to the subject matter.

– KB

Kelly Boehmer is an adjunct professor at Florida State University, The Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online Division, and Chipola College. Kelly is a volunteer instructor for adult artists with developmental disabilities at Pyramid Studios, Tallahassee, Florida. She is a member of the performance band Glitter Chariot. www.kellyboehmer.com.



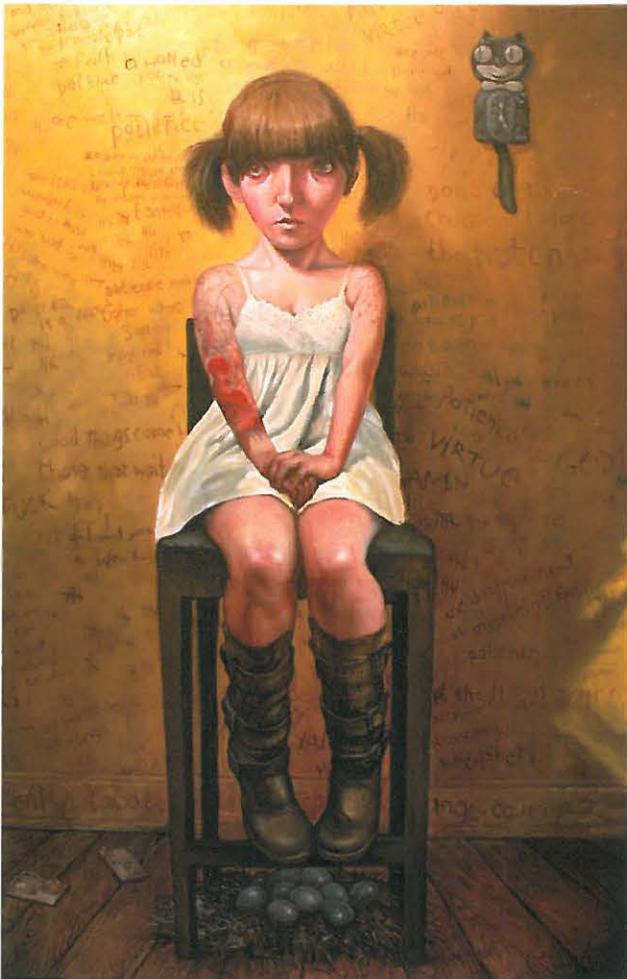
Selected Exhibitions & Awards: 2010 – *Lite-brite*, Lite Box Gallery, Birmingham, Alabama; *Ribbon of Darkness*, The Front, New Orleans, Louisiana. 2009 – *Spit it Out*, The 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, Florida. 2008 – *Seeing Green: an Eco-art Exhibition*, Alija Derzelez House, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; *Freaks*, Privateer Gallery, New York, New York. 2007 – *Stories*, The 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, Florida; *Combined Talents: The Florida International Competition*, Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, Florida. 2006 – *Tranceplant*, Circa Puerto Rico International Art Fair, San Juan, Puerto Rico; *Acts*, William and Nancy Oliver Gallery, Tampa, Florida; *Hechas de Amore*, Edge Zones Art Space, Miami, Florida; *Venus in Faux Fur*, Edge Zones Art Space, Miami, Florida; Jack and Jeanne Rozier Winter Fellowship; Martha and Evert Nolten Memorial Scholarship.

[clockwise from top left] Kelly Boehmer, detail of *Crying Time, We're Gonna Hold On (Self-Portrait as Leviathan and Behemoth)*, collaboration with Chuck Carbia, 2011, mixed media, dimensions variable, approximately 18 x 15 x 15 feet. Kelly Boehmer, detail of *Peace Dove*, 2007, mixed media, 12 x 12 x 10 feet. Photo credit: Tim Clancy. Kelly Boehmer, detail of *Drunken Unicorn*, 2008, mixed media, 12 x 5 x 5 feet.



Kelly Boehmer, *Unicorns (I Am Breaking Eddie Vedder's Heart)*, 2010, mixed media, approximately 20 x 15 x 15 feet. Photo credit: James McClean.

SCOTT G. BROOKS



juxtaposition of humor and tragedy often causes confusion and anger. Even in my most severe pieces, humor exists on some level, if only as a reminder not to take ourselves too seriously.

My work is figurative. It is accessible and facilitates communication. It's an understandable language, and like dance, a narrative is created without words. The stories told in the infinite number of faces, gestures, and bodies I see around me are inspiring and provide me with an endless supply of source material to work from.

Anatomical distortions emerge at the earliest stages in the process, separating the figures from the photographic ideal. The abstraction allows me to get up close and create my own reality. Without the distractions of perfect anatomy, I explore the figure, shape and light on my own terms. The distortions I apply to the figures are recognizable, but more familiar in a different context.

Through my work I strive to understand and create a dialogue with the world around me. I present to the viewer my interpretations of what I see and understand as truthful.

– SGB

Scott G. Brooks lives and works in Washington, D. C. www.scottgbrooks.com.

Selected Exhibitions & Publications: 2011 – *In the Nursery*, Corey Helford Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Dystopia*, CoproGallery, Los Angeles, California; *Modern Fabulists*, View Art Gallery, Bristol, United Kingdom. 2010 – *We the People*, Long View Gallery, Washington, DC; *The Thirteenth Hour*, Last Rites Gallery, New York, New York; *Art and Addiction*, Johns Hopkin's University Press; 2009 – *Domestic Terror*, Last Rites Gallery, New York, New York; *Everything But the Kitschen Sync*, La Luz de Jesus, Los Angeles, California; *Metamorphosis II*, Beinart Publishers; «Lexicon Surreal», *German Encyclopedia of Fantastic Art*; *Max and the Siamese Twins*, Glubdub Press.

[top] Scott G. Brooks, *Patience*, 2009, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches. [bottom] Scott G. Brooks, *Royally Ducked*, 2007, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches.

My work, like the world and people that inhabit it, is multifaceted. Raw, uncomfortable narratives not talked about nor socially acceptable attract me. Social, political, and psychological dramas play out on canvas or paper, and in the process I learn more about myself, and search for insight into what motivated those around me.

There is the facet that is voyeuristic. I intrude and invite the viewer to intrude as well. I peek behind closed doors, into the hidden lives, and private moments of my subjects. Delving into the psyche and physical appearance of the subject being represented, I examine them up close, and then expose them for everyone to examine for themselves.

Humor is important, and used both as a means to an end, and as an end in itself. It softens the blow of tragic circumstances, or creates a sense of irony. Humor draws people in, an endearing quality in otherwise uncomfortable circumstances. The resulting



Scott C. Brooks, *Rich Little Poor Girl*, 2007, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches.



SCOTT C. BROOKS



The best response to all the destruction in this world is to create, use anything and everything, but just create... I love a child's drawing as much as I love a painting by a great master, they both contain a vibrant energy of creative hope.

People think I paint pictures of children... I don't! I paint pictures of the human soul... that alluring image of the hidden part of ourselves... some call them ghosts or spirits but I see them as the image of who we truly are, made manifest with all the objects and bruises that filled the story of each life. Like a wonderful old book you find that captures you with the mystery of the main character – you read the beginning and fall under its spell and become unaware of the real nature of reality because you are absorbed by the story till its end. I figure that's what life is and if you cherished a piece of music or an old jewelry box or favorite chair they become part of your soul just as you leave a part of yourself in those objects when you leave this world... Next time you're in an antique shop, quiet your mind and you will hear all the voices embedded in all of those old things... you will hear them singing to you. Whether on a computer or on a cave wall, the making of images is a form of communication that allows the artist to express their love, their sense of beauty, passion or rage. I am proud of the long tradition I come from of image makers.

– RC

Ray Caesar lives in Toronto, Canada, and may be contacted at the Jonathan LeVine Gallery in New York, New York, the Richard Goodall Gallery in Manchester, United Kingdom, or through Belinda Chun in Toronto, Canada. www.raycaesar.com.

Selected Exhibitions: 2009 – solo exhibition, Richard Goodall Gallery, Manchester, United Kingdom; solo exhibition, Galerie Magda Danysz, Paris, France. 2008 – *In the Garden of Moonlight*, Jonathan LeVine Gallery, New York, New York; *In the Land of Retinal Delights: The Juxtapoz Factor*, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna, California; *The Tales We Tell*, Lonsdale Gallery, Toronto, Canada. 2007 – *Ipsa Facto*, Richard Goodall Gallery, Manchester, United Kingdom; *Rome is Burning / The New School*, Foster Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

[above] Ray Caesar, *Monday's Child*, 2006, digital ultrachrome print on paper, edition of 6, 36 x 48 inches.

Ray Caesar, *Fly Trap*, 2005, giclée print on premier art hotpress paper, 28 x 18 inches.



RAY CAESAR

KATE CLARK



My current work studies the tension between personal and mythical realms. I create “unnatural” sculpture that synthesizes the human face and the body of wild animals. Initially, these forms can be shocking and repelling as viewers both recognize and reject their presence. The disruptive alignment of the human and the untamed asks us to accommodate what cannot be known. The juxtaposition of the intimate face and animal body asserts that human experience is mostly contained, a mask which is incomprehensible and psychologically complex.

We bring assumptions to any contemplation of the “wild.” The wild animals — coyotes, gazelles, wildebeests, fawns — evoke memory of what we cannot recall, memory of our primitive, dangerous selves. The tamed face, our face, is a mirror reflecting safety and cultivation. Emotion is caught in the eyes, the mouth, the tilt of the head. A single life, with its private and unique history, gazes back at us. I ask you to empathize, to seek out yourselves in the vulnerability of expression and to embrace a relationship between a specific experience and a great universal mystery. Here, the dichotomy between intimate and expansive terrain is celebrated, eliciting a primal response.

— KC

Kate Clark lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. www.kateclark.com.

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Kate Clark: Give and Take*, Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile, Alabama. 2009 – *Art Miami*, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York; *NEXT Chicago*, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York; *Uber-Portrait*, Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, Washington; *Pretty Tough: Contemporary Storytelling*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut; 2008 – *Perfect Strangers*, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York; *I Dream of Genomes*, Islip Art Museum, East Islip, New York; *New, Next, Now*, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York.



[top] Kate Clark, *Untitled*, 2011, antelope hide, antlers, clay, pins, thread, rubber eyes, wood, 36 x 16 x 16 inches. [bottom] Kate Clark, *Matriarch*, 2009, zebra hide, foam, clay pins, thread, rubber eyes, 29 x 19.5 x 27 inches.



Kate Clark, *Bully*, 2010, Canadian White Wolf hide, clay, foam, thread, pins, rubber eyes, wood, paint, 82 x 42 x 54 inches. Photo credit: Katsuhiro Saiki.

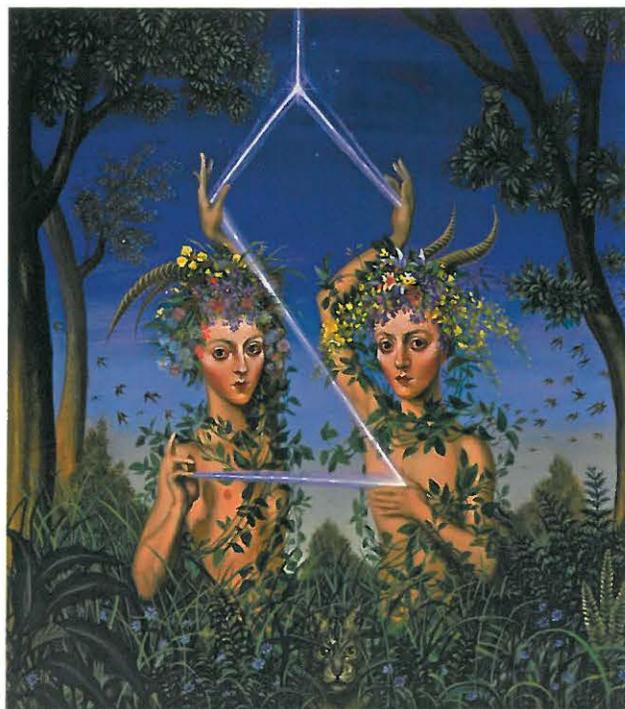
TIMOTHY CUMMINGS



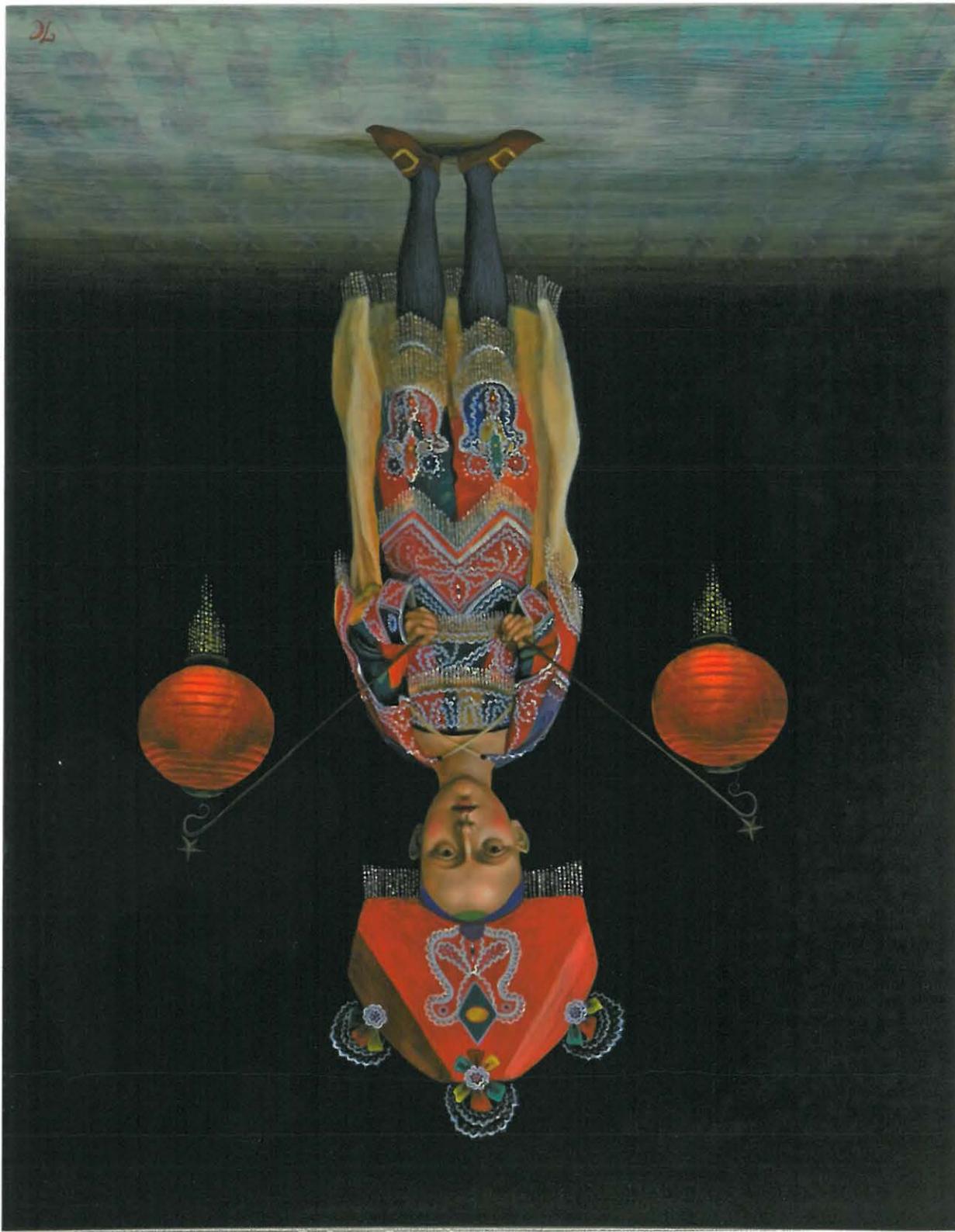
Timothy Cummings produces narrative and portrait paintings on panel that defy his lack of formal training. His work reflects Spanish Catholic and Native American culture of his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The subjects in his work are often children and adolescents trapped in adult worlds and struggling with issues of sexuality, identity and gender.

Timothy Cummings is represented by the Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, California, and the Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, New York.

Selected Exhibitions: 2011 – *Drawing Down the Moon*, Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, New York. 2008 – *The Great Escape*, Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, New York; PULSE Miami Art Fair, Miami, Florida. 2004 – *Pretty, Pretty, Space*, Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, New York. 2001 – solo exhibition, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, California; solo exhibition, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. 1999 – *Masquerade*, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, California. 1998 – *Auslander*, Tenderloin Salon, Berlin, Germany; *Nocturnal Emissions*, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, California. 1997 – *Project Room Exhibition I*, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, California.



[top] Timothy Cummings, *The Chosen One*, 2006, acrylic on panel, 24 x 36 inches.
[bottom] Timothy Cummings, *Galactic Witchcraft*, 2010, acrylic on panel, 18 x 18 inches.



TIMOTHY CUMMINGS

LORI FIELD



My mixed media drawings and paintings straddle a border between reality and dream, past life and present. Through a somewhat 'stream of consciousness' process the drawn figures that emerge evoke subliminal, mysterious worlds — planets of my own creation, demimondes peopled with anthropomorphic 'angels with attitude', accompanied by mutants, exhibitionists, seducers, chimeras...and other intimate strangers.

I create human/animal hybrids who retain the physical characteristics of both. Having deciphered some of the imagery, the symbolism remains far more felt than understood, more disquieting than soothing. My hybrid creatures seem not entirely adapted to either their own environment or the human world. They are odd.

These human/animal archetypes — a cast of recurring characters — create intuitive narratives that explore themes of loss, rebirth, identity, denial, alienation, loneliness...and vulnerability.

—LF

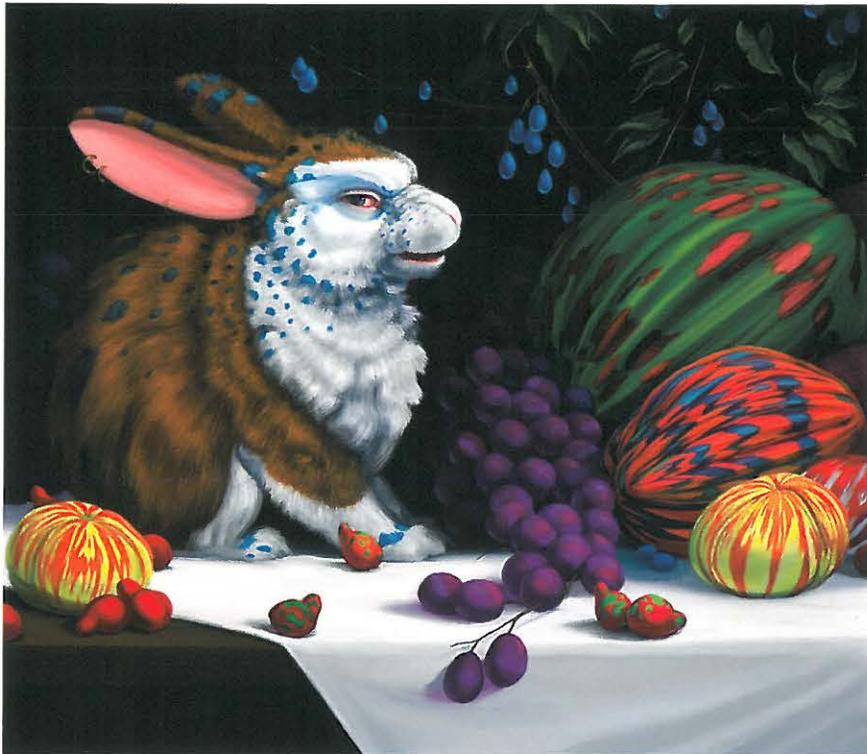
Lori Field is represented by Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York.

Selected Exhibitions: 2011 – *The Singing Woods*, Illinois State University Art Gallery. 2010 – *The Sky is Falling*, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York. 2009 – *Small Saints*, Jeanine Bean Gallery, Berlin, Germany; *Flora and Fauna*, Next Art Fair, Chicago, Illinois. 2008 – *New Paintings*, Tag Art Gallery, Nashville, Tennessee; *Fractured Fairytales*, Strychnin Gallery, Berlin, Germany; *New Paintings*, Kinz + Tillou Fine Art Gallery, New York, New York. 2007 – *Outside In*, Judy Saslow Gallery, Chicago, Illinois; *Saints, Warriors, Tigers, Lovers, Flowers*, Tag Art Gallery, Nashville, Tennessee.



[clockwise from top left] Lori Field, *Chick Magnet*, 2008, colored pencil and encaustic, 16 x 12 inches. Lori Field, *The Children of Lir*, 2011, colored pencil and encaustic, 30 x 30 inches. Lori Field, *Love and Fear, Love or Fear*, 2011, colored pencil and encaustic, 36 x 36 inches.





the colors of our globalized economy, from the day-glo hues of big-box store commodities to the pixilated palettes of television and the Internet, as well as the colors of nationalist identity and political affiliation. Plant vines sprout berries that arrange themselves as psychoactive molecules and mushroom caps display emotional slogans; the landscape becomes an imagined nature's literal embodiment of contemporary expressions of human desire and need.

— LH

Laurie Hogin is a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. www.lauriehogin.com
 Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Laurie Hogin*, Slane College of Communications and Fine Arts, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois. 2009 – *Laurie Hogin*, Kendall Gallery, Kendall College of Art and Design, Grand Rapids, Michigan; *The American Century*, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; *When Animals Talk*, Tory Folliard Gallery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; *Epic Painting*, Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University, Lewisboro, Pennsylvania; *Laugh It Off*, I Walter Maciel Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie*, Palo Alto Center, Palo Alto, California; *Art of the Dog*, Memphis College of Art, Memphis, Tennessee. 2008 – *Neuromantic Evening*, *Psychotropical Paradise* and *Monkey Brains*, Littlejohn Contemporary and Schroeder Romerco Gallery, New York, New York; *Painting 2008*, Gallery Project, Ann Arbor Michigan.

Narratives and stories—from fiction, myth, doctrine, and propaganda, to news items, ad slogans and song lyrics—articulate human experiences. Our current cultural context is one in which free markets promise stories, experiences, images and commodities to fill every conceivable human need and desire, from the most basic to the weirdest and darkest. Recent works are a combination of personal narrative and cultural comment that describe how I am an example of a contemporary individual negotiating the world as she recognizes and copes with the impulses inherent in her own humanity.

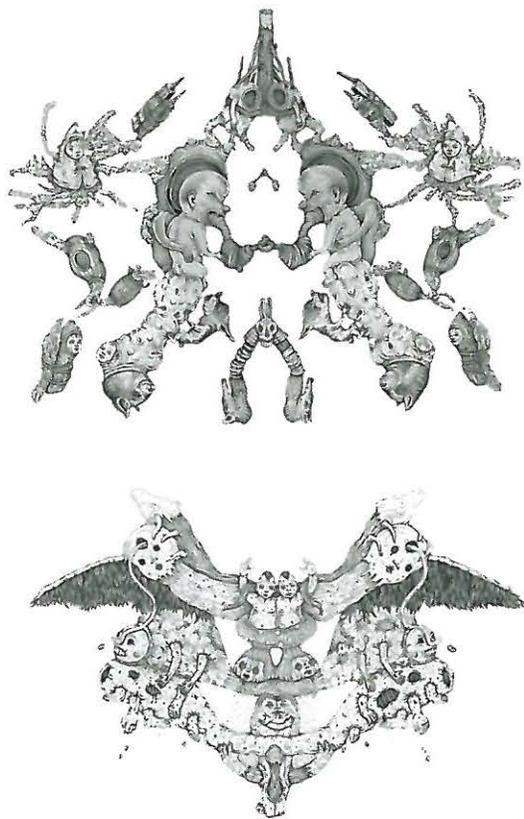
My paintings range in size from the near-heroic to the diminutive. They take their window-like compositions from natural history dioramas and Western landscape, still life, and portraiture, combining visual strategies from the history of painting with contemporary visual conventions. Species are chosen for their allegorical associations in Western culture, but are depicted as degraded or mutant versions: they are the fluorescent colors of contemporary media landscapes. Their morphology resembles toys and cartoons as much as naturalistic specimens. The plants, animals, and objects depicted are

[top] Laurie Hogin, *Diorama with Palliated Species*, 2007, 36 x 48 inches. [bottom] Laurie Hogin, *A Lover's Discourse: Summer*, 2010, oil on panel, 17 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches.





Laurie Hogin, *Crick-Watson Crane (Male)*, 1998, oil on canvas with artist-made frame (wood, paper, resin, metal leaf, epoxy), 38 x 30 inches.



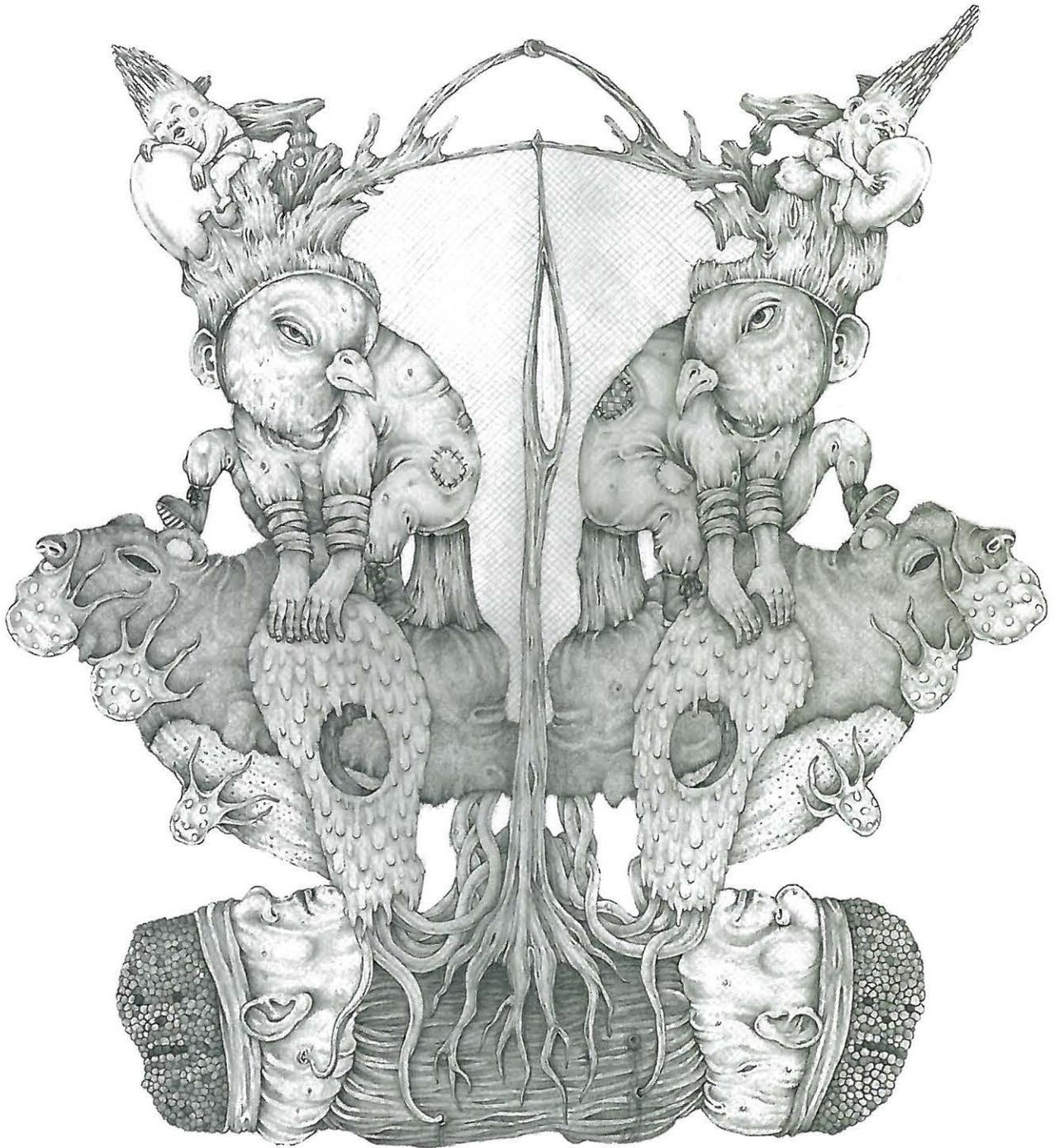
As a child with an overactive imagination, I often envisioned the world as nothing more than dolls and creatures acting out fantastic narratives. I had a hard time keeping my head in reality and I never knew when something I was staring at would become a door into another world. When I slept, I was constantly visited by fantastic imaginings. My dreams were inescapable and graphic, filling my mind with vivid pictures to recreate.

My work focusing on ghosts explores humankind's ongoing fascination with ghosts, spirits and the unknown. In many of these drawings, I researched and illustrated actual reported events that are surrounded by myth and legend, while other drawings became newly imagined scenarios. This work explores ways in which people contact an unseen world, such as the use of Ouija boards and other ceremonies.

– MH

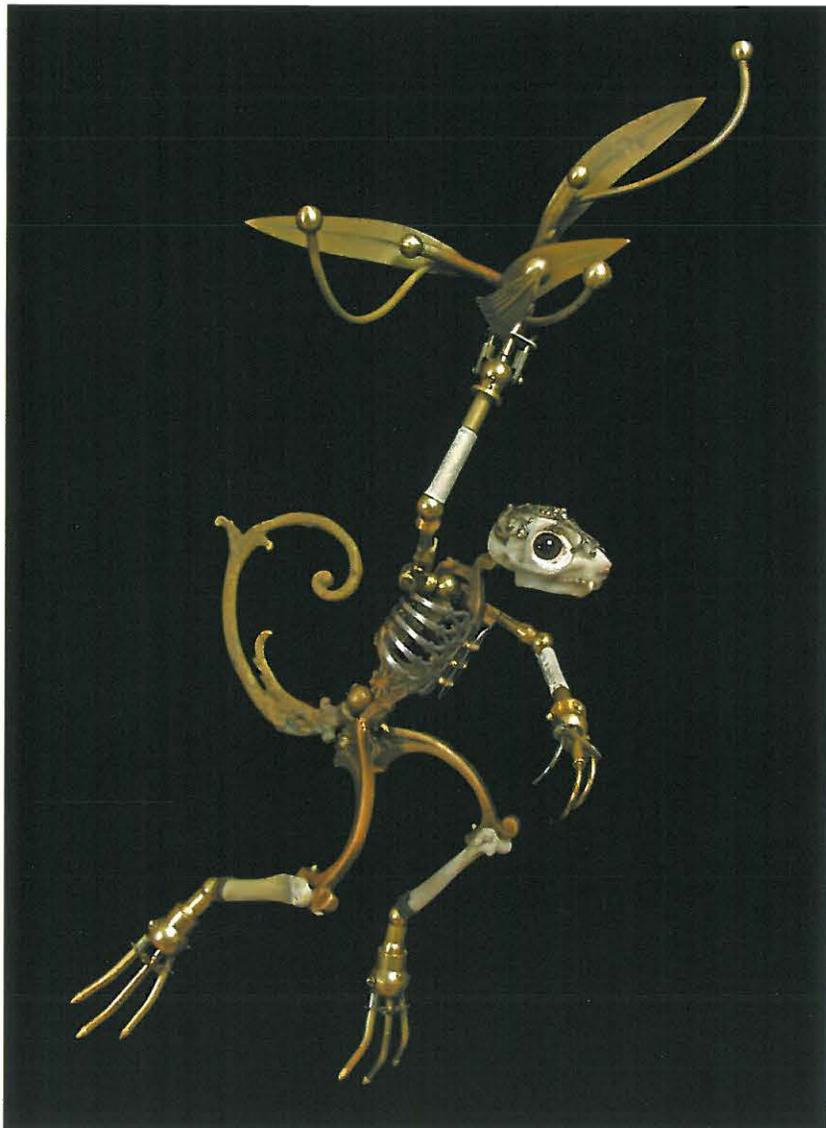
Mark Hosford is an Associate Professor of Art at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Selected Exhibitions & Awards: 2008 – *Ghost Stories*, solo exhibition, Taylor Bercier Fine Art, New Orleans, Louisiana; *Unseen and Undead*, The 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, Florida; *Evil Prints*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; *Fantastical Imaginings*, Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, Delaware; Artist in Residence, Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium. 2007 – *Homegrown Southeast*, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; *The Boston Printmakers 2007 North American Print Biennial*, 808 Gallery at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts. 2006 – *Irony and Allegory*, solo exhibition, Cumberland Gallery, Nashville, Tennessee.

[top to bottom] Mark Hosford, *Stull Kansas*, graphite, gesso, archival inkjet, 12.5 x 19.5 inches. Mark Hosford, *Plate X*, graphite over archival reproduction of Rorschach's inkblot tests, 15 x 22 inches. Mark Hosford, *Plate I*, graphite over archival reproduction of Rorschach's inkblot tests, 15 x 22 inches.



Mark Hosford, *Plate IX*, graphite over archival reproduction of Rorschach's inkblot tests, 15 x 22 inches.

JESSICA JOSLIN



Jessica Joslin spent her early years wandering through the halls of natural history museums, enchanted with the exquisite Victorian-era taxidermy and osteological displays, with their brass fittings and gleaming wood. Inspired by these visits, she began to slowly acquire a collection of natural objects: shells, seedpods, feathers, bones, and assorted oddities. In 1992, she began building the first beasts of this menagerie, using objects from her collection.

– Text courtesy of Lisa Sette Gallery

Jessica Joslin is represented by Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona. www.jessicajoslin.com

Selected Exhibitions: 2011 – *In the Trees: Twin Peaks 20th Anniversary Exhibit*, Los Angeles, California; *25th Anniversary Exhibition*, Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; *Old Souls (Reincarnated Objects)*, Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Lush Life*, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington; *Cojoined in 3D*, CoproGallery, Santa Monica, California; *25th Anniversary Exhibition, La Luz de Jesus Gallery*, Los Angeles, California. 2010 – *Hybrids*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Brass & Bone*, Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; *Rogue Taxidermy Show*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Everything is Illuminated: Revealing the Back Room*, Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; *Lowbrow Tarot Project*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Natural Beauty*, Mondo Bizzarro Gallery, Rome, Italy.

[top] Jessica Joslin, *Egon*, 2008, antique hardware and findings, brass, bone, leather, steel, cast/painted plastic, glass eyes, 17 x 8 x 9 inches. [bottom] Jessica Joslin, *Lautrec*, 2008, brass, bone, glove leather, fur, glass eyes, 3.5 x 11 x 4.25 inches.





Jessica Joslin, *Gustav*, 2008, antique brass findings and hardware, bone, velvet, satin, antique steel tricycle, glass eyes, 19 x 19 x 16 inches.

RICHARD A. KIRK



Richard A. Kirk is a visual artist, illustrator, and author. His artistic practice is focused on the creation of drawings in ink, silverpoint, and graphite. Thematically, his work is concerned with literature, the unconscious mind, memory, transformation, and natural history. In 2010, Richard and his wife Elaine created Radiolaria Studios, a small press dedicated to the production of books related to Richard's art and fiction. Richard's work can be found in private collections worldwide.

Richard A. Kirk lives and works in London, Ontario, Canada. www.richardakirk.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2011 – *Luminous Metal*, Clement Gallery, Troy, New York; *Stranger!*, Shadowwood Collective, The Arts Project, London, Ontario; *Imaginaire*, Copenhagen, Denmark. 2010 – *Quadrant Fantasy*, Saeby, Denmark; *A Curious Collection of Monstrous Tinies*, Shadowwood Collective, The Arts Project, London, Ontario; *Seven Year Itch*, Strychnin Gallery, Berlin, Germany; *Curious and Curiouser*, Gallery Nucleus, Alhambra California. 2009 – *Apocalypse Wow*, MACRO, Rome, Italy; *KumStart*, Art Fair, Bolzano, Italy; *Line Weight*, Gallery Nucleus, Alhambra, California.



[top] Richard A. Kirk, *Palace of Flies*, 2010, ink on hotpress paper, 10 x 14 inches. [bottom] Richard A. Kirk, *The Cuckoo's Promise*, 2011, ink on hotpress paper, 10 x 14 inches.



Richard A. Kirk, *Murder in the Court of the Katydid King*, 2009, ink on paper, 8 x 12 inches.



I get inspired by the industrial world, all the rigidity of machinery, the network of pipes, wires, refineries, etc. Then I join that with its opposite: flowing, graceful, harmonious, and pleasing design of the Baroque and Rococo. And of course I add a bit of weirdness and the macabre. It's all about how I see the evolution of what man makes his created environment look like. I had such a major emphasis in painting and drawing earlier in my career – and had a great time with it – but I always felt something was missing. I knew deep inside I was a builder, and so my 3-D work is the expansion into that realm. I still enjoy painting and doing figurative work, but those moments are reserved for special times. Yet sculptural works are wonderfully intricate constructions of pop culture effluvia like plastic model kits, injection molded toys, dolls, plastic skulls, knick-knack figurines, miniature fencing, toy animals, mechanical parts and ornate frames or furniture parts, assembled into grotesque tableaux that look a bit like an explosion in Hieronymus Bosch's attic.

My art speaks of a timelessness: potentiality and motion attempting to reach on forever, and yet pessimistically delayed, forced into the stillness of death and eternal sleep. I treat morbidity with a sympathetic touch and symbolize the paradox of the death of the individual by objective personification of death. There is a fear of this consciousness because it drops in upon us without mercy, and yet there is a need to appeal to it in order to provide a sense of security, however deluded that sense may be. My art warns us that this appeal is irrelevant, and that we should be slow to create a need for it. The themes I use also teach us that although death may pursue us arbitrarily, we should never neglect to mourn the tremendous loss of individual potential.

In personal reflection, I feel that in the world today much of mankind is oftentimes a frivolous and fragile being driven primarily by greed and materialism. I hope that my art exposes the fallacies of Man, unveiling a new level of awareness to the viewer. My works have received several awards and prizes and have been featured in over 100 exhibitions in galleries and museums worldwide including the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. My art can also be seen in a number of international art magazines, book covers and theatrical posters, and is featured in both public and private collections in the United States, Europe, and Australia including private collections such as those of Mark Parker (Nike CEO), Kay Alden (three time Emmy award winning writer for *Young and the Restless* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*), Fred Durst (musician, and film director), and Chris Weitz (movie director of *The Golden Compass*, and *American Pie*).

– KK

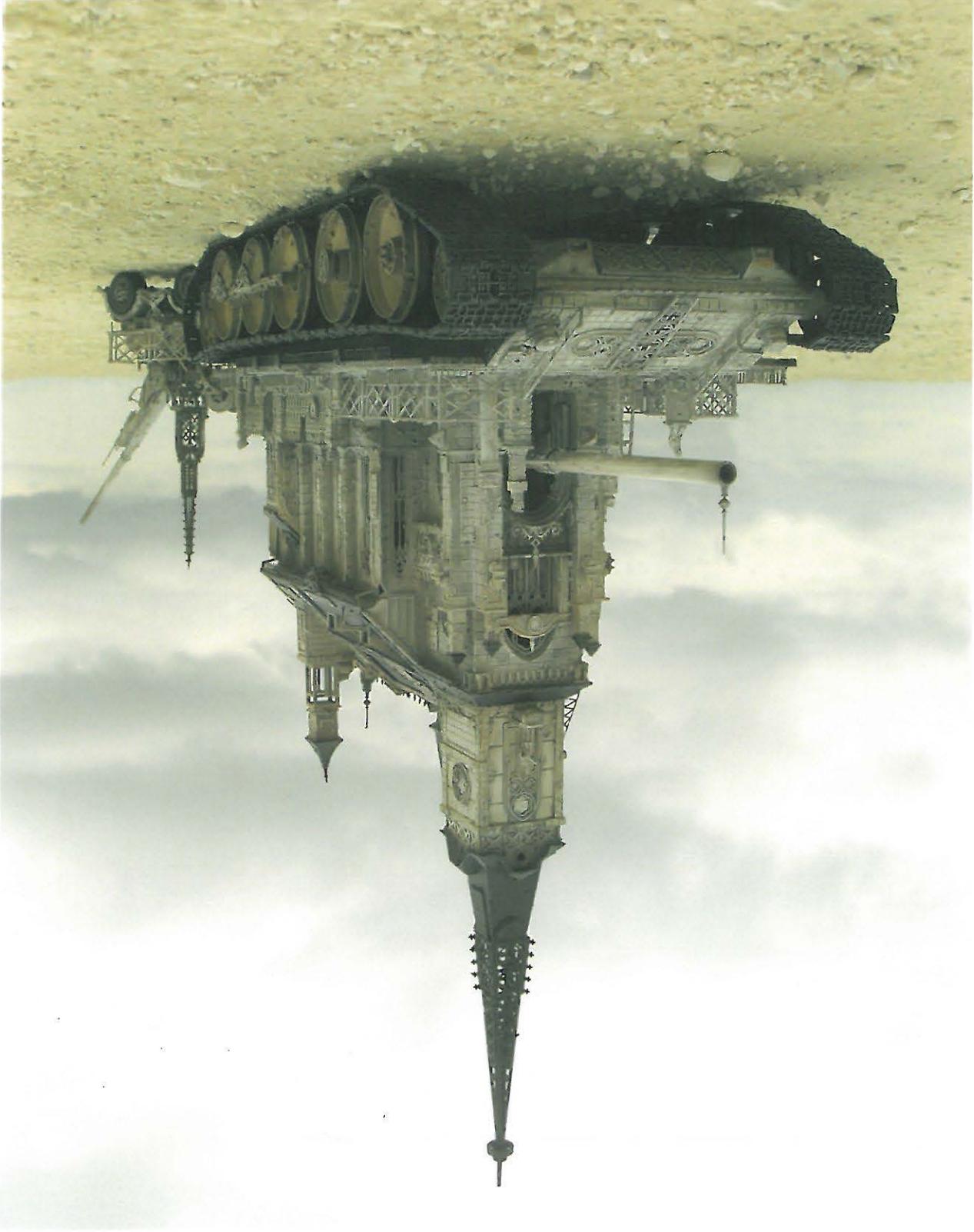
Kris Kuksi is represented by Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York.

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – group exhibition, Scope Art Fair, Miami, Florida; *Lowbrow Tarot Show*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *The Blab! Show*, CoproGallery, Santa Monica, California; *Summer Group Show*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; solo exhibition, Scope Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland; *Meticulous Engagement*, San Francisco, California; *High Fructose Group Show: Overdose*, CoproGallery, Santa Monica, California; *Lush Life 2*, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington. 2009 – group exhibition, Scope Art Fair, Miami, Florida; *Beast Anthology*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *Steampunk*, Museum of History of Science, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom; *The 13th Hour*, Last Rites Gallery, New York, New York; *Carnival of Fires*, Gallery 5, Richmond, Virginia; *The Blab! Show*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *Kansas Master's Invitational*, Strecker Nelson Gallery, Manhattan, Kansas; *Monster?*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *Summer Group Show '09*, Stolen Space, London, United Kingdom; *Divine Invasion*, Meta Gallery, Toronto, Ontario; *Overdose*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California.



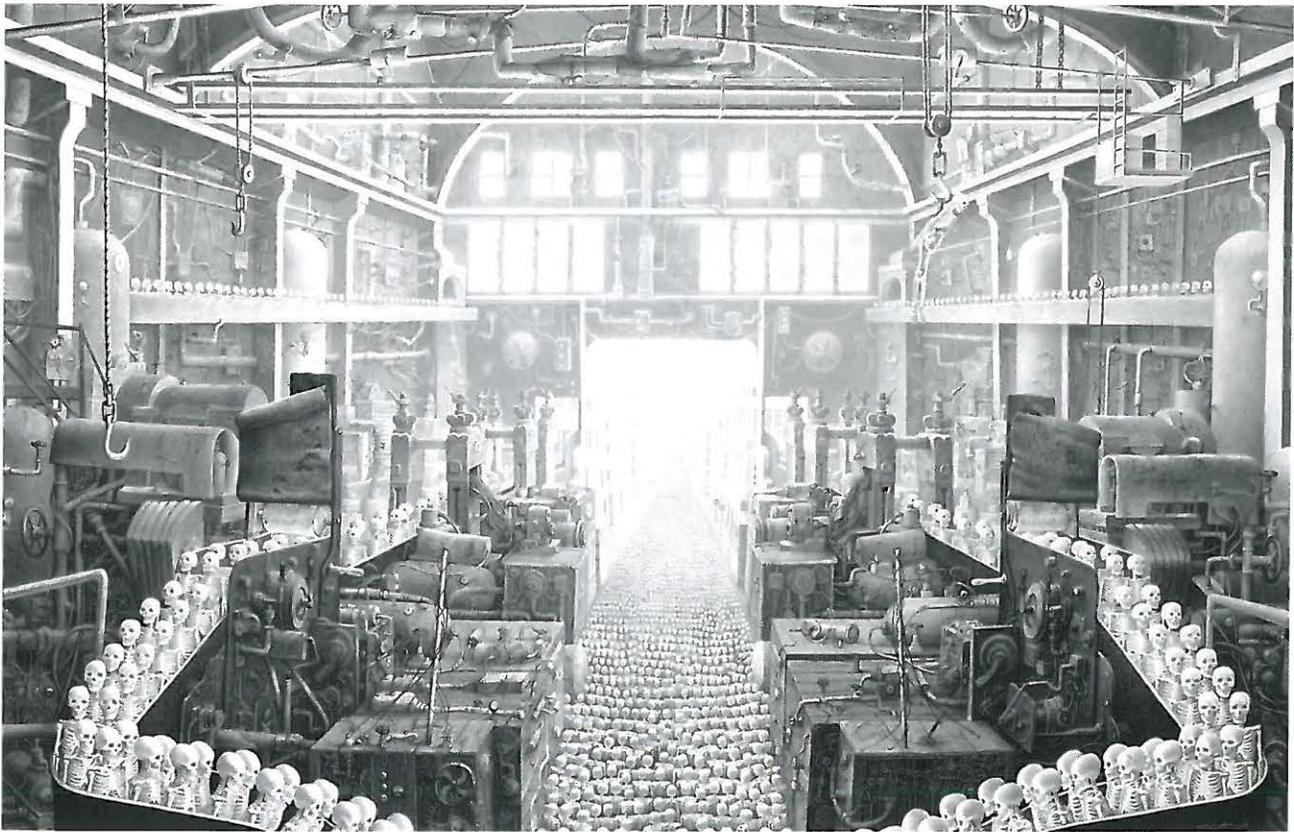
[top] Kris Kuksi, *The Tower of Babel*, 2007, 54 x 44 x 10 inches. [bottom] Kris Kuksi, *Lies and Persuasion*, 2007, mixed media assemblage, 34 x 25 x 5 inches.

Kris Kuksi, *Parasite and Host*, 2004, mixed media assemblage, 30 x 30 x 9.5 inches.



KRIS KUKSI

LAURIE LIPTON



It was all abstract and conceptual art when I attended university. My teachers told me that figurative art went 'out' in the Middle Ages and that I should express myself using form and shapes, but splashes on canvas and rocks on the floor bored me. I knew what I wanted: I wanted to create something no one had ever seen before, something that was brewing in the back of my brain. I used to sit for hours in the library copying Durer, Memling, Van Eyck, Goya and Rembrandt. The photographer, Diane Arbus, was another of my inspirations. Her use of black and white hit me at the core of my being. Black and white is the color of ancient photographs and old TV shows . . . it is the color of ghosts, longing, time passing, memory, and madness. Black and white ached. I realized that it was perfect for the imagery in my work.

—LL

Laurie Lipton lives and works in London, United Kingdom. www.laurielipton.com
Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Weapons of Mass Delusions*, Cal State Fullerton Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, California; solo exhibition, CoproGallery, Santa Monica, California; *Lowbrow Tarot Cards*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Machine Punk*, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *400 Women*, Shoreditch Hall, London, United Kingdom. 2009 – *The Sleep of Reason*, Galerie T40, Dusseldorf, Germany; *Pulse Art Fair*, New York, New York; *The Extraordinary Drawings of Laurie Lipton*, Contemporary Urban Art Centre, Liverpool, United Kingdom.



[top] Laurie Lipton, *The Dead Factory*, 2009, charcoal and pencil on paper, 32 3/5 x 53 inches. [bottom] Laurie Lipton, *The Fourth Horse of the Apocalypse*, 1986, pencil on paper, 13 x 10 1/2 inches.

Laurie Lipton, *Pandora's Box*, 2011, charcoal and pencil, 39 x 28 inches.



LAURIE LIPTON

TRAVIS LOUIE



Travis Louie's paintings come from the tiny little drawings and many writings in his journals. He has created his own imaginary world that is grounded in Victorian and Edwardian times. It is inhabited by human oddities, mythical beings, and otherworldly characters who appear to have had their formal portraits taken to mark their existence and place in society. The underlying thread that connects all these characters is the unusual circumstances that shape who they were and how they lived. Some of their origins are a complete mystery while others are hinted at. A man is cursed by a goat, a strange furry being is discovered sleeping in a hedge, an engine driver can't seem to stop vibrating in his sleep, a man overcomes his phobia of spiders, etc. ... Using inventive techniques of painting with acrylic washing and simple textures on smooth boards, Louie has created portraits from an alternative universe that seemingly may or may not have existed.

Travis Louie is represented by Merry Karnowsky Gallery, Los Angeles, California, and Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington. www.travislouie.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Curious Myths*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; 2009 – *Strange Grooming Habits*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *August Group Exhibition*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *Kokeshi*, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, California; *Lush Life*, Roq la Rue, Seattle, Washington; solo exhibition, Yves Laroche, Galerie d'Art, Montreal, Quebec; solo exhibition, William Baczek Fine Arts, Northampton, Massachusetts; *Overdose*, Copro Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *The Art of Sketch Theatre*, Gnomon Gallery, Hollywood, California; *Superschool*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *World on Fire*, Pacific Electric Lofts, Los Angeles, California.



[top] Travis Louie, *Henry and His One Flat Surface*, 2009, acrylic on board, 16 x 20 inches. [bottom] Travis Louie, *Edvard Twitchy Jones*, 2006, acrylic on board, 8 x 10 inches.

Travis Louie, *Curse of the Coat*, 2006, acrylic on board, 8 x 10 inches.



TRAVIS LOUIE



posed by some to have no self at all. It's in every single one of us, somewhere underneath that word on our chest.

In my hands, my version: All art is political in some sense, be it through conformity, reflection, propaganda or rebellion. My paintings are rallies and trials, photographs of a moment when Truth was made public, and Mercy known. Question why a villain is villainized, a victim martyred. Ask why a group is demonized, and the motives for control. See for yourself what the Truth looks like in your hands. Dig it up and hold it for awhile. This work you see, it's my Truth. But please don't take my word for it.

—CM

Chris Mars lives and works in Minneapolis, Minnesota. www.chrismarspublishing.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Milagros Small Work Invitational*, Sacred Machine Museum, Tucson, Arizona; solo exhibition, Erie Art Museum, Erie, Pennsylvania; solo exhibition, Mesa Contemporary Arts, Mesa, Arizona; solo exhibition, The Phipps Center for the Arts, Hudson, Wisconsin; group exhibition,

Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, California. 2009 – solo exhibition, Longview Museum of Fine Arts, Longview, Texas; solo exhibition, Billy Shire Fine Arts, Los Angeles, California.

I learned it first from my Brother. He didn't teach me; I watched it. They will pin a word on your chest and use it against you. They will create a word that's excuse to take your humanity away. I saw it happen to him.

And everyday, this: A word to make you serve, and one to make you grateful for it. There is a label out there just for you. This will make you easier to categorize, and sell to. There is a word for the man next to you who makes you comfortable with the fact that you have so much more than he does. There is a word for you that tells you what to settle for. There are the voiceless, who cannot speak for themselves. These are the easiest ones to shrink down. There are words for the non-conformers, simple words that can be quickly acknowledged by those who buy in. Crazy. Faggot. Gang. Rich. One is sinful, one is lazy, one is violent by nature and one is always, always good enough.

It's such a precious thing that no one wants you to have it. You can't be trusted with it. It's such a delicate thing that it turns to something different in different hands. They might bury it, but you can dig it up. You are strong enough for the Truth.

From my hands, my mission: To free the oppressed; to champion the persecuted, and the submissive; to liberate through revelation the actualized Self in those pro-





Chris Mars, *To Vanquish Dogma*, 2008, oil on panel, 21 x 21 inches.

[facing page, top] Chris Mars, *Flushing the Celebration of Ignorance*, 2009, oil on panel, 24 x 30 inches. [facing page, bottom] Chris Mars, *Like Moths*, 2008, oil on panel, 15 x 16.5 inches.

ELIZABETH MCGRATH



Influenced by a Roman Catholic upbringing, punk rock, Erté and Edward Gorey, Hollywood native Elizabeth McGrath is one of her generation's more unique and prolific artists. She creates in a number of mediums and materials with undeniable artistry and imagination. Her paintings are haunted whispers of color, depicting subtly dangerous creatures that creep toward the edge of the canvas. Her stitched and bandaged dolls and toys are a united army of soft strangeness, and her mixed media dioramas are isolated freak shows displaying rotting, subhuman figures luxuriously dressed for your pleasure or contempt.

—Text courtesy of Sloan Fine Art

Elizabeth McGrath is represented by Sloan Fine Art, New York, New York. www.elizabethmcgrath.com

Selected Exhibitions: 2009 - *Shadowless Summer*, Sloan Fine Art, New York, New York; *The Land of Retinal Delights*, Laguna Beach Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California. 2008 - *Tears of the Crocodile*, IguaPop, Barcelona, Spain; *Skin Deep*, Mesa Arts Center, Mesa, Arizona. 2007 - *The Incredible Disorder*, Billy Shire Fine Arts Gallery, Culver City, California; *Tug of War*, Hemphill Gallery, Washington, DC. 2005 - *Altarwise by Owl Light*, Billy Shire Fine Arts Gallery, Culver, California.



[top] Elizabeth McGrath (tattoo design: Morgan Slade), *Two Headed Weasel*, 2009, mixed media, 10 x 10 x 5 inches. [bottom] Elizabeth McGrath, *Dik Dik*, 2009, mixed media with Swarovski crystals, gold leaf and silver leaf, 24 x 33 x 9 inches.



Elizabeth McGrath, *Frankie Machine*, 2000, wood, resin, metal, tar, 36 x 64 inches.

KATHIE OLIVAS

My current body of work, entitled the "Misery Children" series focuses on the constant social desire to assign "cuteness." This often serves as a means to make something innocent and more appealing, therefore, non-threatening. Perhaps this allows us to comfort ourselves. My questions are based on the discomfort of "what if" – what if these sweet creatures had other ideas? What if they knew something we were afraid to open our eyes to? Would they protect themselves; would they be able to adapt to a war torn environment and develop their own defense mechanisms? The characters are meant to evoke a nostalgic reaction that reflects isolation, fear, and an uncertainty; yet, at the same time they serve as empowered alter egos. This series is presented as a satirical look at how fear affects our sense of reality. The characters perform as narrators in lonely worlds that each explores individually, creating his or her own perspective, and thus, own reality. As our hosts, the ensemble provides a sense of comfort, the reminiscent style is soothing, yet the mood is dark. As children, they evoke a sense of temporality; childhood serves as a starting ground, a place where things begin.

Inspired by early American portraiture that often depicted children as small adults in an idealized new land,



the characters parallel this vision within their own sense of post-apocalyptic conformity, uniquely documenting their own stories in a mysterious brave new world.

– KO

Kathie Olivas lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is represented by L'Autre Galerie, Montreal, Canada; Opera Gallery, New York, New York; Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight, San Francisco, California; and CoproGallery, Los Angeles, California. www.miserychildren.com

Selected Exhibitions: 2011 – *Stranger Factory*, solo exhibition, C7 Space, Albuquerque, New Mexico; *Monsters & Misfits*, three artist exhibition, Kusakabe Mingei-kan (Kusakabe Folk Art Museum), Hida-Takayama, Gifu, Japan; *Lyric*, 323 East Gallery, Royal Oak, Michigan. 2010 – *Phantasmagoria*, four artist exhibition, Galerie Yves Laroche, Montreal, Quebec; *Living Between Worlds*, two artist exhibition, Gallery 1988, Los Angeles, California; four artist exhibition, Opera Gallery, New York, New York; *Sentimental*, solo exhibition, CoproGallery, Los Angeles, California; *Bittersweet*, solo exhibition, Gallery 1988, San Francisco, California. 2007 – *The Instigators*, Trifecta Gallery, Las Vegas, Nevada; *Second Hand Smoke and Mirrors*, L'Autre Galerie, Montreal, Canada; *Pop Surrealism Group Show*, Oklahoma City Arts Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; *Elevation: Inaugural Group Show*, Limited Addiction Gallery, Denver, Colorado. 2006 – *Parasitic Haze*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *The Accomplices*, Bluebottle Gallery, Seattle, Washington; *Operation Fragmentation*, BOMA, Columbus, Ohio; *Triamese*, Thinkspace, Los Angeles, California; *SHO Time*, The Alcove Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia.



[top] Kathie Olivas, *Hesitate*, 2009, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches. [bottom] Kathie Olivas, *Sentimental*, 2009, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches.

Kathie Olivas, *Elizabeth*, 2004, oil on canvas, height 34 inches.



KATHIE OLIVAS

MARION PECK



seems. And with her dark sense of humor and irrepressible optimism, she assures us that while life can be ominous, tragic, even deceptive, it is also beautiful, magical and alive with hope.

Marion Peck earned her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and went on to study at two different MFA programs, Syracuse University in New York and Temple University in Rome. Her work has been exhibited at galleries and museums worldwide including Sloan Fine Art, Bellwether Gallery and DFN Gallery in New York, Roq la Rue, Davidson Galleries and the Center on Contemporary Art in Seattle, Galerie Magda Danyz in Paris, Galleria Giampiero Biasutti in Turin, The Laguna Art Museum and The Bristol Art Museum. Born in The Philippines while her family was on a trip around the world, she lived in Rome and Seattle before settling in Eagle Rock, California.

– Text courtesy of Sloan Fine Art



With references ranging from Pieter Bruegel and Roland de la Porte to Holly Hobbie and paint-by-numbers, Marion Peck mines the depths of art history, popular culture and the human experience for her meticulous narratives. Sometimes referred to as a contemporary surrealist because of her propensity to incorporate dream imagery into her work, Peck looks beyond the subconscious, reminding us that the waking world is never quite as it

[top] Marion Peck, *Lambland*, 2007, oil on canvas, 25 x 37 inches. Marion Peck, *Sleepwalk*, 2009, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches.

Marion Peck, *Leviathan*, 2004, oil on canvas, 15 x 11 inches.



MARION PECK



my work as if it came from some kind of master plan or philosophic stance. I rely mostly on my intuition when making work and I tend to understand it only with hindsight. Clichéd and sentimental subjects and decorative designs fascinate me – not just as a forbidden fruit and not as a strategy for ironic commentary but because this is the stuff, that time and time again, I am obsessed with, in love with and that I have faith in.

– JS

When I started working in stained glass as a student in 1980, I thought, “This is the thing that will never bore me!” – of course that didn’t turn out to be entirely true, but I think, over time, I have developed a true love for the medium and for its mostly unexplored expressive “painterly” possibilities.

When I went to art school, I thought for sure I would be a painter but the medium soon started feeling all wrong to me. I find few things more terrifying than a blank canvas and nothing is more easily filled with meaningless “arty” brushstrokes. I went through a phase when I would gesso over all the superfluous elements – and I would always end up staring at a white rectangle again. I can’t remember why, but around that time I took a stained glass elective class. Because it was not my major, I felt free to do junk. All my life I have been a compulsive “doodler” and I began interpreting these doodles in stained glass. This was the magic moment when I understood the “secret of art” – and that I had been doing it all along without recognizing it!

With regard to subject matter, I don’t have narratives in mind and am trying to be deliberately vague and open to interpretation. Telling a story is never as fascinating as snatching a moment out of time and freezing forever in space. In order to create a full picture, I am forced to supply a context for the faces I draw. The context usually includes a full body and an environment – abstract or pictorial. This context could be seen as the life and/or world of the character. So my subject could be interpreted as “people” and “life.”

As with the faces, when working on the rest of the image, I am looking for a combination of the familiar and the unexpected, the absurd and the ordinary and an image that is “all wrong in all the right ways.” All the things I was told in art school that I couldn’t do because they “are not art” are things I am irresistibly attracted to now.

It would be misleading to speak about the significance of

Judith Schaechter is represented by the Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, New York. www.judithschaechter.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Judith Schaechter: A Relentless Pursuit of Perfection*, Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile, Alabama. 2009 – *Judith Schaechter: A Relentless Pursuit of Perfection*, Taubman Museum, Roanoke, Virginia; *Ashes to Ashes: Life and Death in Contemporary Art*, Contemporary Art Center of Virginia, Virginia Beach, Virginia; *Forever Young*, Abington Art Center, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania; *Seriously Stupidity*, Shadow’s Space Gallery (Kung Fu Necktie), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Fata Morgana: The New Female Fantasists*, Dabora Gallery, Brooklyn, New York; *Pretty is as Pretty Does*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



[top] Judith Schaechter, *New Bride*, 2007, stained glass, sandblasted, engraved, painted with vitreous paint, assembled with lead, copperfoil and exhibited in lightbox, 26 x 52 inches. [bottom] Judith Schaechter, *The Cold Genius*, 2009, stained glass, sandblasted, engraved, painted with vitreous paint, assembled with lead, copperfoil and exhibited in lightbox, 25 inches high, 43 inches at the top and 35 inches at the base.



Judith Schaechter, *Joan of Arc*, 2007, stained glass, sandblasted, engraved, painted with vitreous paint, assembled with lead, copperfoil and exhibited in lightbox, 35 x 31 inches.

GREG SIMKINS



the eco-structure of "The Outside." My characters who live there find nothing foreign or strange about their surroundings and introduce them to newcomers as one would to their backyard garden. "The Outside" just...is.

At the end of the day, when the paint is hardening on the palette and the final coat of varnish has been applied, I sit back and lace my fingers behind my neck and escape into what was once trapped in my head. It is no longer the blank canvas that I cut my fingers assembling. A mass of wood, staples, linen and gesso the acrylic brush strokes are barely noticeable. The long journey from blank slate to finished piece is now finished and I enjoy a glimpse of what is going on inside "The Outside."

– GS

Greg Simkins has been featured at the following galleries: Gallery 1988, Los Angeles, California, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York, and Yves Laroche, Galerie d'Art, Montreal, Quebec. www.imscares.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2010 – *Inside the Outside*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York. 2009 – *The Pearl Thief*, Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight, Los Angeles, California; *Seeing Things*, Fifty245f, San Francisco, California; *Overdose*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *The Art of Sketch Theatre*, Gnomon Gallery, Hollywood, California. 2008 – *It Wanders (West)*, Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight, Los Angeles, California; *It Wanders (East)*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *The Well*, MModern Gallery, Palm Springs, California; *Locked and Loaded*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *Stan Lee Tribute*, Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight, Los Angeles, California.

After a family trip to Hawaii, I was struck by the beauty everywhere – from the flowers and the trees, sunsets and clouds – to the incredible colors of the fish and wildlife in the reefs just out front and buried in the ocean. I swam where fish and sea turtles were everywhere and I couldn't feel more blessed to be interacting with such beautiful creatures. Watching a documentary shortly afterward on Yellowstone National Park, I was amazed at the number of different elements in nature that are so familiar to me but will never be realized by each other. We will never see snow covered coral reefs inhabited by butterflies alongside moray eels. Deer will not gallop beside killer whales and birds will never share their nests with a family of jellyfish. Of course, it is now my job to make some introductions and see where they go. These are some of the symbiotic relationships that are going on peripherally in the world I paint. They are what make up



[top] Greg Simkins, *Judge and Jury*, 2008, acrylic on panel, 60 x 48 inches. [bottom] Greg Simkins, *Duchess Dreaming*, 2008, acrylic on panel, 36 x 50 inches.

Greg Simkins, *Night's Hand*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches.



GREG SIMKINS



through this language of robotics and mechanism, an exploration of the human condition. The initial pre-occupation with technology and its impact on life remains fundamental to my work and is evidenced by the language of robotics and the mechanisms which are used to express any idea. But now, since we are obviously, increasingly, and inextricably linked to technological tools and aids that are virtually and literally extensions of ourselves, I take this principle for granted and concern myself with aspects of the human condition, having turned my interests inward to more philosophical explorations.

— HT

Heidi Taillefer lives and works in Montreal, Canada. www.heiditaillefer.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2009 — *An Uncanny Lineup of Serendipitous Connections*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *East Meets West I*, Michael Berger Gallery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; *World's On Fire*, Pacific Electric Lofts, Los Angeles, California; *Clownie, Baby; Amputee*, Antebellum Gallery, Los Angeles, California. 2008 — *Muses and Heroes*, Irvine Contemporary, Washington, DC; *Aspect: Ratio 1*, Irvine Contemporary Gallery, Washington, DC; *SPLATTER*, Antebellum Gallery, Hollywood, California; *Locked and Loaded*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, New York; *Literartistry*, Coery Helford Gallery, Los Angeles, California.

I have always been fascinated by strangeness and oddities, and this interest weaves itself into my art as I depict subjects transformed into curiosities themselves, which are formed out of an assembly of bric-a-brac designed to convey some wider message. This approach grew out of an obsession with mechanizing everything under the sun, be it mushroom still-lifes to ants or polar bears. My preoccupation was with environmental destruction, and the impact of technology and its advance on the planet. Although I endlessly painted robots, this actually mirrored my love of nature and animals, as my art addressed issues ranging from animal testing to species extinction, and the woven integration of the environment and sustainability of biodiversity on this planet.

I was depicting a world populated with artificial surrogates, like prosthetics to fill in widening gaps in the natural food chain, as a cynical solution to a problem too few too low down were willing to acknowledge in time to make a difference. And now that problem has become apparent to the global masses, as scientists argue whether is it in fact too late to save the planet from the damage which has already been inflicted, which does not appear to be abating, and amidst the largest mass extinction since the age of the dinosaurs.

Since this was the default setting in my work, I extended my sphere of interest to humans themselves in order to include,



[top] Heidi Taillefer, *Citizen Fain*, 2003, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches. [bottom] Heidi Taillefer, *Venus Envy*, 1999, oil on canvas, 44 x 60 inches.

Heidi Tallifer, *Pyrophoric*, 2002, oil on canvas, 50 x 70 inches.



HEIDI TALLIFER

CHRISTIAN REX VAN MINNEN



[top] Christian Rex Van Minnen, *Still life 1.5*, 2009, oil on canvas, 22 x 28 inches. [bottom] Christian Rex Van Minnen, *Abstract Figurative Series #1.2*, 2007, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches.

My works tend to fluctuate between the poles of abstraction and figuration: the truth of the paint film and the illusion of the image. By rendering form from abstraction, the image grows into a chimera of grotesqueries, a self-portrait of sorts in many forms. Recently, I've been practicing this process within the conventions of portraiture and still-life. These conventions tend to express and reveal notions of personal and collective identity. By rendering form from abstraction within the context of portraiture and still-life, the viewer/sitter dynamic is destabilized and we begin to see personal identity in a new visual context. In a time when we are constantly prodded with fearful messages, suggestions of immanent terror and visceral horror, I feel compelled to contemplate mortality and find peace and consolation in the real beauty of decay and impermanence. I feel this is the only way to know peace and truth.

— CRVM

Christian Rex Van Minnen lives and works in the western US. www.seevanminnen.com

Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2011 – group exhibition, Museet Biologiska, Stockholm, Sweden; *Empty Anniversary Show*, Ambush Gallery, Sydney, Australia; *INLE*, Gallery 1988, Los Angeles, California; *Letter Collector*, Gallery Hijinks, San Francisco, California; *Dystopia*, CoproGallery, Santa Monica, California; *Another Roadside Attraction*, ISE Cultural Foundation, New York, New York. 2010 – solo exhibition, Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, California; group exhibition, MiTO Contemporary, Barcelona, Spain. 2009 – *Neo-Grotesque*, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington; *Quinquennium Exhibitum*, Gallery Nucleus, Los Angeles, California; *OCHO: Numero Atomico*, ROJO Artspace, Barcelona, Spain. 2008 – *The 13th Hour*, Last Rites Gallery, New York, New York; *15th Annual Realism Invitational*, Klaudia Marr Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Christian Rex Van Minnen, *Lvas, Rainbow, Blight Series*, 2010, oil on canvas, 20 x 23,5 inches.



CHRISTIAN REX VAN MINNEN

MARTIN WITTFOOTH



[top] Martin Wittfooth, *Saints Preserve Us*, 2009, oil on linen, 48 x 64 inches. [bottom] Martin Wittfooth, *Bacchus*, 2010, oil on panel, 48 x 36 inches.

Martin Wittfooth's work stems from a personal desire to process and reflect on the increasingly haywire relationship, confusion, and general detachment – both of experience and understanding – that the modern-day industrialized world has with its surrounding environment, and the forced and uneasy assimilations that take place when the two inevitably meet. By removing the human figure from the works and instead portraying nature in man-made or manufactured settings, Wittfooth's work forces us to be impartial observers to these scenes and to process the tension within them as mere witnesses rather than active participants. Much of this work deals with violence, disquiet, chaos and collapse, but not entirely absent in these works is also the suggestion of hope and the presence of beauty.

Wittfooth's art draws both technical and conceptual inspiration from a wide variety of classical painters, but in their subject matter and themes his paintings are concerned with addressing a broad range of contemporary issues.

Martin Wittfooth lives and works in New York, New York. www.martinwittfooth.com

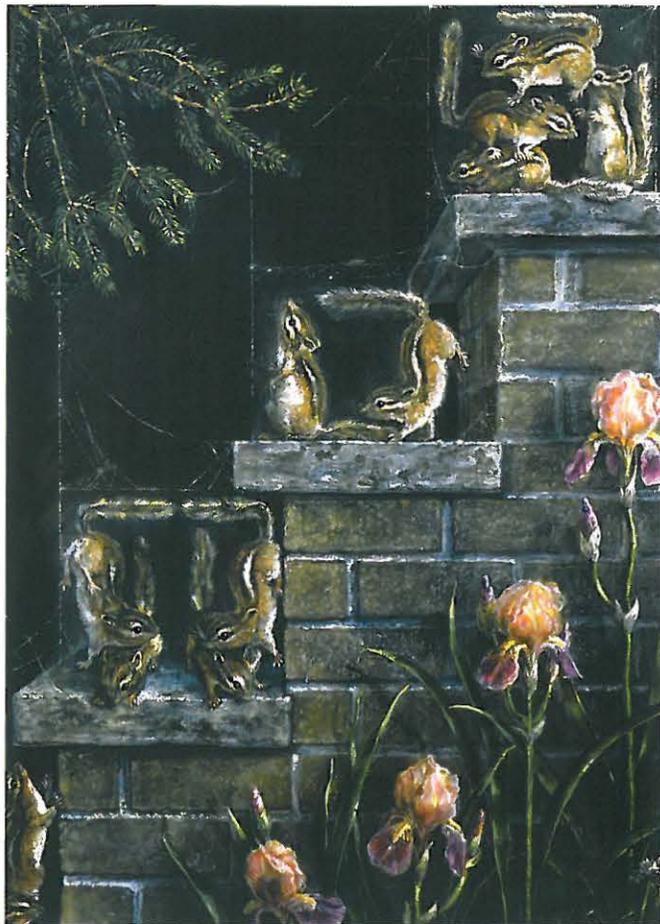
Selected Recent Exhibition: 2011 – *Suggestivism*, Grand Central Museum, Los Angeles, California. 2010 – *Gardens*, solo exhibition, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington; *Tempest*, solo exhibition, CoproGallery; Santa Monica, California; *Group show*, PULSE Art Fair Miami / Lyons Wier Gallery New York, Wynwood Miami, Florida; *Survey Select*, Wonderhaus, San Diego, California; *Art Shack*, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California; *Art From the New World*, Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, United Kingdom. 2009 – *Babylon*, solo exhibition, Yves Laroche, Galerie d'Art, Montreal, Quebec; *Don't Wake Daddy IV*, Feinkunst Krueger, Hamburg, Germany; *Blab! Art Show* and book release, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *Beach Blanket Bingo*, Jonathan LeVine Gallery, New York, New York; *Lush Life*, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington; *Overdose: Hi Fructose Magazine Invitational Group Show*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California; *Pulse Art Fair New York*, juried art fair, Pulse Art Fair, Copro / Nason Gallery, New York, New York. 2008 – *Sandcastles in the Tide*, solo exhibition, Copro / Nason Gallery, Santa Monica, California. 2005 – *Melting Season*, solo exhibition, La Luz de Jesus Gallery, Los Angeles, California.

Martin Wittfooth, *The Devil's Playground*, 2010, oil on panel, 48 x 36 inches.



MARTIN WITTFOOTH

THOMAS WOODRUFF



Thomas Woodruff is a self-proclaimed “neo-fabulist” artist who always works in series on large, complex imagistic projects.

Hatched from personal experiences, the projects are often apotropaic and elegiac in nature, dealing with issues raised by the AIDS epidemic, aspects of maintaining wellness, and celebrating the outsider in all of us. The imagery is a cross-culturally hybridized, relentlessly figurative, technically tricky, perversely ornate, and more often than not – dark.

Thomas Woodruff is the Chairman of the Illustration and Cartooning Departments at the School of Visual Arts in New York, New York. He is represented by P.P.O.W, New York, New York. www.thomaswoodruff.com

Selected Exhibitions: 2010 – *Freak Parade*, Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 2009 – *Freak Parade*, Selby Gallery, Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, Florida. 2008 – *Solar System (The Turning Heads)*, P.P.O.W, New York, New York; *Freak Parade*, Herron School of Art and Design, IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana. 2007 – *Freak Parade*, University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach, California. 2006 – *High Drama: Eugene Berman and the Legacy of the Melancholic Sublime*, Long Beach Museum, Long Beach, California.



[counterclockwise from top] Thomas Woodruff, *Impossible Swan*, 2002, tinted charcoal, Swarovski crystals and corsage pins on paper, 40 x 29.75 inches. Thomas Woodruff, *Chipmunk Geometry*, 2002, tinted charcoal, Swarovski crystals and corsage pins on paper, 40 x 29.75 inches. Thomas Woodruff, *Owl Head Stand*, 2002, tinted charcoal, Swarovski crystals and corsage pins on paper, 40 x 29.75 inches.

Thomas Woodruff, *Tzarina Terapina*, 2002, tinted charcoal, Swarovski crystals and corsage pins on paper, 40 x 29.75 inches.



THOMAS WOODRUFF



When I start a painting, I let my intuition lead the way, just like when I was a kid, sketching without an obvious purpose, lost in a world of monsters. It felt like home then and it still does now.

The characters I paint may seem like creatures from another dimension, but I think they are simply us, here and now. Modern humanity without its masks, without the adornments that make us acceptable to whatever group we are a part of. From the straight-laced conservative to the anti-social rebel, we all cover up to fit in someplace. Yet the only place where we are truly the same is on the inside. We all share feelings of fear and loneliness. We feel insecure

and vulnerable. We feel separate from our environment and each other. These are the feelings that I try to convey in my paintings. These are the feelings that connect us.

– CZ



Chet Zar lives and works in Monrovia, California. www.chetzar.com
Selected Recent Exhibitions: 2009 - *Lilith*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *When Worlds Collide*, L'Imagerie Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *October Shadows*, Nucleus Gallery, Los Angeles; *Magistrates*, Strychnin Gallery, Berlin, Germany; *The Monster Show*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Overdose*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Superschool*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *This is the End*, Alternative Café, San Francisco, California; *Movers and Shakers*, POVevolving, Los Angeles, California. 2008 - *Ugly American*, Strychnin Gallery, London, United Kingdom; *We Are the Shadows*, Copro / Nason Gallery, Los Angeles, California; *Postapocalysm*, Roq la Rue Gallery, Seattle, Washington.

[top] Chet Zar, *Lilith*, 2009, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches. [bottom] Chet Zar, *Pipe Dream*, 2010, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches.

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Back cover details from the artworks of participating artists appear in the following order: [top]: Kathie Olivas; [bottom left to right] Lori Field; Kelly Boehmer; Elizabeth McGrath; Travis Louie; Heidi Taillefer.

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