

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FELECIA CHIZUKO CARLISLE has had numerous exhibitions in Florida galleries, museums, and public spaces, including Dorsch Gallery, Dimensions Variable (Miami), Locust Projects (Miami), the Deering Estate at Cutler (Miami), The Atlantic Center for the Arts (New Smyrna Beach, FL), and the Miami Art Museum. National and international venues for her work include Saltworks Gallery (Atlanta), the Golden Pudel Club: PudelKollektion (Hamburg, Germany), and the MoabVideo Project, (Madrid, Spain).

Felecia Chizuko Carlisle received her MFA degree from the New Genres department at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2006. She received her BFA from the University of West Florida *summa cum laude*. Her work is represented by Dorsch Gallery (Miami). She was born in Pensacola, FL.

NAOMI FISHER's work embraces drawing, photography, performance and video installation, and has been shown at the Miami Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art (North Miami), the Fabric Workshop (Philadelphia), Haifa Museum of Art (Israel), and the Palais de Tokyo (Paris). Her solo exhibitions include the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kansas City, MO), Fredric Snitzer Gallery (Miami), Vizcaya Museum and Gardens (Miami), and Leo Koenig (New York). Her work is represented in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington, DC), Deste Foundation (Athens), New Museum of Contemporary Art, Altoids Collection, (New York), Olbricht Foundation (Essen, Germany), The Rubell Family Collection (Miami), and the De La Cruz Collection (Miami).

Naomi Fisher holds a BFA degree in Photography from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, 1998. She was born in Miami.

CHRISTY GAST's complex installations, videos, and performances have been shown at numerous galleries and museums in the United States including MOMA/PS1 Center for Contemporary Art (New York), Artist's Space (New York), Harris Lieberman Gallery (New York), the Socrates Sculpture Park (New York), and the 07 Biennial of Visual Art Performa (New York), the Miami Art Museum, the Bass Museum of Art (Miami), and the de la Cruz Collection (Miami). Internationally, she has presented performances at Scheinbar Variete, (Berlin, Germany) Cabaret Voltaire (Zurich, Switzerland) and Centro Cultural Matucana 100 (Santiago, Chile).

Christy Gast received her MFA degree in New Genres from Columbia University, New York, 2004, and her BFA in Sculpture and a BA in Women's Studies, from the Ohio State University, Columbus, 1999. She has also attended the Internationale Sommerakademie für Bildende Kunst (Salzburg, Austria), and the University of Brighton (Brighton, England). Gast is represented by Gallery Diet (Miami). Gast was born in Coldwater, OH.

SAMANTHA SALZINGER has had numerous exhibitions in and around the state of Florida including Gallery Diet (Miami), Dina Mitrani (Miami), Fredric Snitzer Gallery (Miami), Locust Projects, Florida International University Gallery (Miami), University Galleries, Florida Atlantic University (Boca Raton) and the Museum of Art (Fort Lauderdale). She has exhibited internationally at the Edward Day Gallery (Toronto, Canada) and Visarte-M54 Projectraum (Basel, Switzerland).

Salzinger holds an MFA degree in Photography from Yale University, 1997 and a BFA degree from Florida International University, Miami, 1995. She was born in Westfield, NJ.



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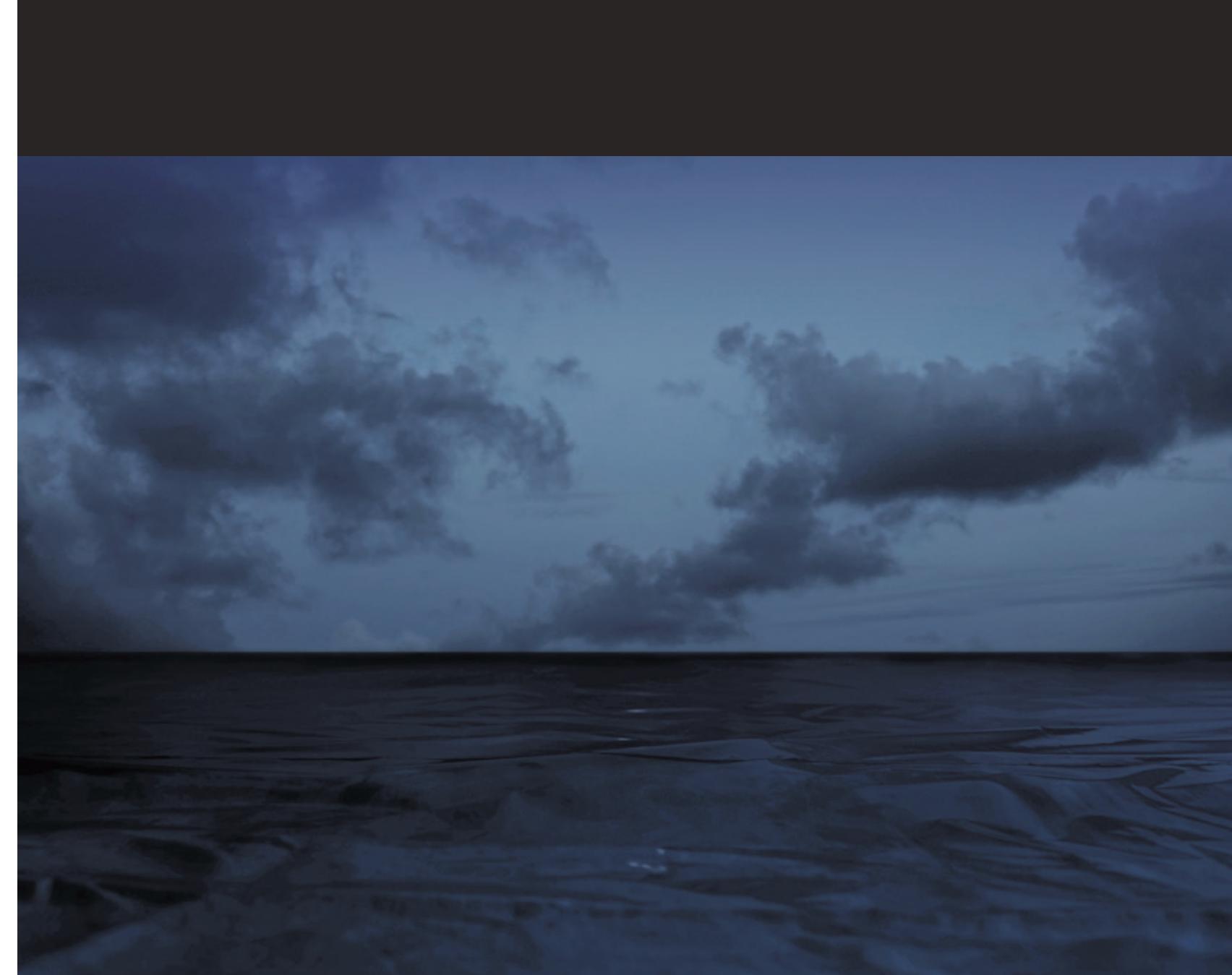


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Inside cover image: Naomi Fisher, *Dirty Hand*, 2008

Cover image: Samantha Salzinger, *Untitled #4*, 2011



In Residence

June 4 – August 4, 2012
USF Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa

In Residence

by Jane Simon, Curator, USFCAM

“Landscape is the work of the mind,” Simon Schama writes in his influential book, *Landscape and Memory*.¹ According to Schama, landscape is a cultural construction and a “rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions,”² rather an unfettered wilderness meant for human exploitation. The tension between the cognitive landscape we have developed—defined as a culture—and the tremendous natural arena we call earth underpins the work of Felecia Chizuko Carlisle, Naomi Fisher, Christy Gast, and Samantha Salzinger. The artists all live and work in the greater Miami area, a community known for lively culture, ethnic diversity, real estate development, and the fragile ecosystem of the Everglades. While these artists have trained in California, Connecticut, Maryland and New York, they have returned to focus on the natural conditions of Florida with fresh eyes and a heightened perspective. In their videos, photographs, sculptures, and installations these artists address the interplay between the fake and the real, the exploitation and control of natural resources, and the persistence of natural elements even in highly urbanized areas. *In Residence* explores the contested space between the natural world and the built environment in Miami.

In Christy Gast’s video *Herbert Hoover Dyke* a lone tuxedoed figure tap-dances around the immense concrete expanse of the Herbert Hoover Dike, encircling Lake Okeechobee. The drama of this juxtaposition of figure and landscape is compounded by the imposing projection surface, a structure mimicking a concrete dam or spillway that corrals viewers into the space in much the same way that the dike itself controls the flow of water through South Florida. A group of sculptures installed around this structure include a bouquet of fake wild grasses sprouting from a turtle shell, fishermen’s boots cast from coral and epoxy, and a discarded length of rope molded into a sculpture. Gast’s vaudevillian dancer calls to mind a time when the American environment was idealized and exploited simultaneously. We often perceive this past environment as pristine and unobliterated in comparison to the ravaged and plighted aftermath of decades of human intervention that we encounter today. But Gast’s work reveals one of the instances in which populations felt that natural resources were meant to be exploited and that nature had to be controlled and managed for human benefit. This thinking played an important role in American movements westward and southward. Frontiers, in American and religious thinking—even explained in the book of Genesis—were meant to be dominated by human hands. In contrast, today’s *zeitgeist* revolves around preserving sacred habitats.

Gast positions her body on and around the dike and Lake Okeechobee as one way to discuss evolving perspectives on the natural world. The dike, named after Depression-era President Herbert Hoover, was constructed after earlier earthen berms failed to block the storm surge of hurricanes on the Atlantic coast in 1926 and 1928.³ It is a thirty-foot retaining wall that prevents water from overflowing from Lake Okeechobee—one of the largest freshwater lakes in the continental United States—into the surrounding suburban and agricultural lands. To some, the dike is a tremendous example of American ingenuity and domination over an unpredictable body of water. To environmentalists, it is a behemoth of poor planning and disastrous water management. Juxtaposing our present moment with hints of the past, Gast’s work deals with how we understand what is around us, especially how the goals of land management have changed in the last century. Moreover, Gast’s work is not a perfunctory tale of what not to do, rather it is a nuanced call to think about the evolving intersection between culture and nature.

Christy Gast, *Herbert Hoover Dyke*, 2010



Felecia Chizuko Carlisle, *Island Song (after Charlemagne Palestine)*, 2012

Like Gast, Felecia Chizuko Carlisle is also deeply interested in how bodies interact—in this case with architectural structures. For *In Residence*, Carlisle has created two site-specific works that combine her diaristic take on Miami and the particularities of USFCAM’s architectural space. *Past, The Oasis* consists of a series of native and nonnative plants: philodendrons, bromeliads, and dracaenas, arranged outside the museum. Designed as a man-made tropical island, the work was intended to contrast biological forms with the planned, hard lines of the museum’s building. Moreover, Carlisle’s “oasis” has literal connections to the tropical climate of Southern Florida and metaphorical connections to states of mind in which an individual is freed from mundane concerns. Carlisle is giving viewers an example of mental and physical isolation where enlightenment and spiritual transformation can unfold. A sound composition, featuring the artist’s poetry, is embedded within the island. The exterior work grew out of Carlisle’s plans for *Island Song (after Charlemagne Palestine)*, a two channel video that Carlisle made by strapping two cameras to her body—front and back—and recording her regular route through the city. Replete with images of graffiti-covered warehouses, expansive blue skies, and diving birds—the video is a nod to the performance artist and musician Charlemagne Palestine.

Carlisle learned about the work of artist/performer Charlemagne Palestine when she was studying at the San Francisco Art Institute. Long associated with free thinking and beat culture, Palestine is known for creating both staged and spontaneous performances that touch on religious symbolism and ritual with the reaction of the viewer in mind. Palestine was born Chaim Moshe Tzadik Palestine in New York, where he also trained to be a cantor. Song, travel, and theatrical props figure prominently in his work. He is perhaps best known for *Island Song*, a 1976 video work in which he circumnavigates a small island in the Pacific, recording what he

saw and what he heard from a motorbike. He chants during the work, fusing his actions and his perceptions. Purposely derivative, Carlisle’s video installation mimics Palestine’s technique, but instead reflects her experiences in her chosen city of Miami. The wind and sounds of the city streets replace the hum of Palestine’s motorcycle and voice, and the high-definition sharpness of Carlisle’s work contrasts with the low-fi grit of Palestine’s video. Carlisle is a native Floridian, but she was educated in California. Returning to Florida gave Carlisle the opportunity to view landscape and her roots with renewed vigor. These works represent a return to a native sensibility of the tropical, urban, ritual, and experiential. Never before had Carlisle felt the urge to weave the personal and the quotidian into her work.

Samantha Salzinger addresses the nature of the real in her photographic and video works. Salzinger creates detailed and delicate models of romantic environments, and she captures the microenvironments with her digital SLR camera. One such photograph, *Untitled #4*, portrays an image of water glistening under the diffuse light of a cloudy night sky. Another image by Salzinger, *Untitled #5* features a clearing in the forest where a black-and-white egg hatched. Purple flowers populate the foreground of this photograph, but the main action is one of rebirth and regeneration. Romantic and forlorn, these works are evocative of landscapes from literature, cinema, and the history of art. In fact, Salzinger’s water appears as a contemporary interpretation of Caspar David Friedrich’s seminal painting, *Monk by the Sea*, a canvas featuring muted colors but also a dramatic seascape. To Friedrich’s followers, his renditions of natural phenomena are so dramatic and awe-inspiring that they are considered the epitome of landscape painting and the sublime.⁴ In the artist’s own words, her photographs are about “projecting mysterious places in an era of genesis. The images reference ideologies of popular culture

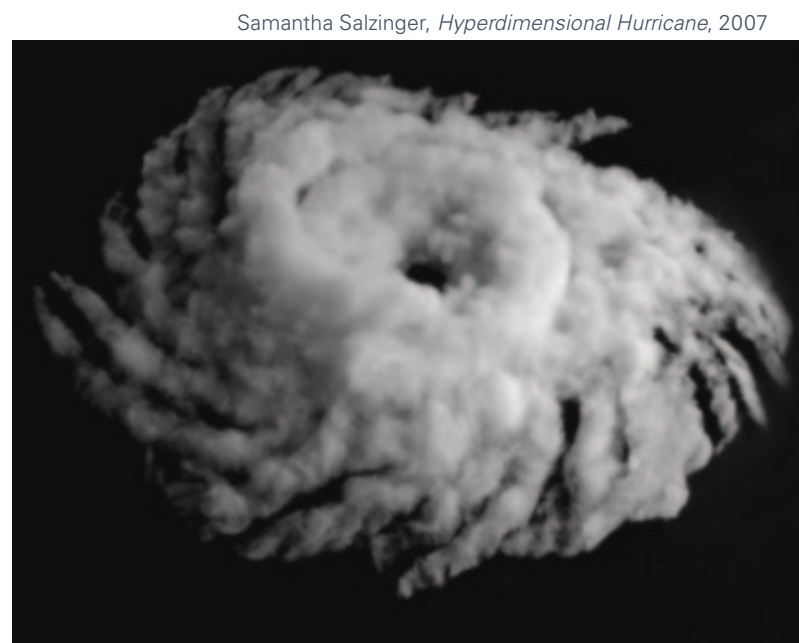
that play to our fantasies, fears, and desires.”⁵ In both images, we are confronted with landscapes that harbor both positive and negative associations within our contemporary mindset.

Salzinger has also created video works that employ the same process as her still photographs. In *Hyperdimensional Hurricane*, Salzinger created a maquette with cotton and black paper. Fastidiously capturing each modulation of the cotton, Salzinger was able to create a video that shows the mass of wind and moisture that forms a hurricane, but embedded in the eye of the storm are changing religious symbols, from Stars of David to pentagrams. Salzinger is a self-described science geek, and while working in her studio one day, she heard an interview with rogue physicist Richard Hoaglund.⁶ Although Hoaglund has been employed by major network television companies, his ideas about the weather and space are not widely accepted by the academic community. But for Salzinger, they were one way to think about the effects of human actions on the environment. Hoaglund’s theories posit that human ideas about the formation of the world are encoded in natural disasters. Salzinger’s video not only visualizes some of the prophecies of religious thinking, but also puts forth contemporary conspiracy theories. Her video seems particularly appropriate today when global warming has intensified natural disasters. She makes a wry comment on how we can sometimes perceive what we want to see—in this case, Hoaglund and his followers determine religious meaning in empirical phenomena. Despite the faux nature of the materials she uses—sometimes cotton balls, green foam, cellophane, or potting soil—Salzinger’s images conjure both landscape—in Schama’s terms culture—religion, and nature.

Naomi Fisher is the daughter of a botanist who specialized in tropical plants. Fisher grew up around the work of her father—experiencing the wet climate of South Florida and Malaysia. Fisher returned to this platform when she began her career as an artist, and for years she has made work about the intersection between sexuality and botanical forms. For the work shown in *In Residence*, Fisher staged different individuals in compromised positions in garden settings. One such image shows a young man, topless, lying among yerba santa and spiral ginger. His face is obscured, so we are left to imagine what has happened to him or what will happen to him. Fisher’s images show us the effect of an absent narrative that we can only imagine. According to philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the quality of *in media res* that Fisher presents to us is much like the structure of a novella in which the narrative unfolds from the middle, and it is the job of the reader or viewer to piece together the drama around the image.⁷ Another photograph features the artist clothed in sparkly patterns—reaching her hand into the air. The work is titled *Dirty Hand*, drawing our attention to the subject’s



Naomi Fisher, *Untitled (Topless Boy)*, 2000



Samantha Salzinger, *Hyperdimensional Hurricane*, 2007

soiled palm in the top right of the photograph. Fisher often addresses the possibility of a natural life in her works where seamless human interaction with nature is seen as impossible because of civilization. More importantly, Fisher is also equating the natural with the sexual, drawing our attention to what we project onto natural forms. Fisher is a self-described feminist, and in her terms, it is an act of liberation to stage and construct the natural and the human as sexual. Fisher’s creation of the sexual as vulnerable—flawed—presents itself as a possibility for agency and enlightenment, but the road is punctuated with brief, soiled moments of victory. Fisher’s work interacts with the others in the exhibition by fusing both our understanding of ourselves with our understanding of landscape and nature.

These four artists incorporate changing attitudes about landscape and the natural world into their videos, installations, and photographs. Christy Gast’s *Herbert Hoover Dyke* focuses on the drive to control the natural water flow of Lake Okeechobee and the debate surrounding new understandings of the Florida ecosystem. Felecia Chizuko Carlisle comments on both her experience of Miami and the setting of *In Residence* at the Contemporary Art Museum as well as her maturing understanding of Florida. Samantha Salzinger presents viewers with a very real rendition of highly-charged environments created from natural and synthetic materials. Naomi Fisher stages dramatic photographs that equate the sexual with the natural and botanical. From these works, multiple perspectives of the natural are presented for the inquisitive, active mind of the viewer. All four of these artists fold theories and ideologies of the landscape into their refreshed takes on the evolving, fragile Florida environment.

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1. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Random House: New York, 1995), 7.
2. Ibid., 9
3. For an in-depth discussion of the development of the dike, see Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*, (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks), 2006
4. I feel it is also necessary to say that Hitler and the Third Reich also appropriated Friedrich’s painting as central to German identity and German attachment to landscape. Simon Schama explores the forest in German culture in chapter two of *Landscape and Memory*; see “Der Holzweg: *The Track Through the Woods*,” 75-134.
5. <http://samanthasalzinger.com/statement/>
6. For more about Hoaglund and his ideas about hurricanes, see <http://www.enterprisemission.com/hurricane1.htm>.
7. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1987, pp. 192-207.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Felecia Chizuko Carlisle

Island Song (after Charlemagne Palestine), 2012
two channel video
22 minutes 17 seconds
USFCAM Commission 2012

Past, The Oasis, 2012
various plant and tree species,
mulch and audio equipment
dimensions variable
USFCAM Commission 2012

Naomi Fisher

Dirty Hand, 2008
c-print
50 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL

Red Shoes, 2000
c-print
50 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL

Untitled (Topless Boy), 2000
c-print
50 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL

Christy Gast

Herbert Hoover Dyke, 2010
single channel video on brightsign media player
53 minutes
Ed. 3/5
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Herbert Hoover Dyke Tux, 2010
tuxedo jacket, shell, blouse,
handmade sash
39 x 22 x 6 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Left Foot, 2010
copper, resin, shell, pigment
20 x 11 x 4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Christy Gast cont.

Okeechobee Legs (Envelope), 2011
resin, shell, aluminum, pigment
37 x 15 x 16 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Okeechobee O, 2010
plywood, tar, shell, pigment rope
24 x 24 x 3 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Right Foot, 2010
tar, metal, fabric, paint, shells
34 x 9 x 4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Turtle Bouquet, 2010
turtle shell, synthetic grasses,
wire and foam
26 x 32 x 8 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Diet, Miami, FL

Samantha Salzinger

Ascension, 2011
single channel video
3 minutes, 59 seconds
Courtesy of the artist

Hyperdimensional Hurricane, 2007
single channel video
29 seconds
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled #2, 2011
ink jet print
26 3/4 x 42 3/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled #4, 2011
ink jet print
28 1/2 x 42 3/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled #5, 2011
ink jet print
26 1/2 x 42 3/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist