

Sand in the Vacuum

MFA 2012 Graduation Exhibition

USF Contemporary Art Museum

March 30 – May 5, 2012

Biff Bolen
Megan Hildebrandt
Jay Hollick
Sarah Kelly
Shane M. Maberry
Forrest MacDonald
Cynthia Mason
Taylor Pilote
Scott Rosenberg
Serhat Tanyolacar

School Director's Statement

Congratulations to our Master of Fine Arts students in this graduation exhibition. Their artworks embrace and reflect many of the key directions of contemporary art practice.

For three years, these exceptionally imaginative students have engaged our distinguished faculty and endured challenging critique sessions as well as sleepless nights preparing for semester reviews. They have stretched well beyond their initial perceptions of what art can be and its impact on an audience.

The MFA at USF is acknowledged as a premiere program among its peers nationally. Its uniqueness resides in a demanding curriculum of studio practice and inquiry coupled with critical studies seminars in the history of art and elective courses throughout the disciplines of a major research university.

Faculty welcome the prospect to connect with our students, responding to new concepts and working as collaborators as well as conductors to uncover fresh dimensions in the forms, objects, performances and images that are created. Our valued staff provides resolve and ingenuity in solving formidable problems, from bureaucratic labyrinths to one-of-a-kind projects.

The MFA program offers every graduate student the opportunity to work in any medium of materials and to select from among our eminent faculty for directed study contracts. Virtually unheard of at other institutions, this open invitation to explore, experiment and discover, leads to startling and innovative outcomes. The fruit of this philosophy toward graduate art studio studies, along with a varied student body from throughout the nation and beyond, endows this exhibition with delightful and provocative stagings of new art.

The unorthodox nature of many of the works has generated a tremendous amount of consultation and cooperation between the Museum staff and our students. We offer our sincere gratitude for assisting these artists in realizing their envisioned realities and developing this exhibition.

And, again, congratulations to our graduating MFA students! The graduate studio experience affords the time and community to expand ideas about art and oneself, and the relationship of the two to the larger world. USF has benefited from your presence and we wish you the very best.

Wallace Wilson | Director
USF School of Art and Art History

Acknowledgements

The USF Contemporary Art Museum, Institute for Research in Art, is a nationally accredited museum, within the structure of a major metropolitan university. The museum is an exciting destination for students to see the work of established, as well as emerging artists, and provides a critical component to the educational process for all students, and is of special importance to the graduate students in the School of Art and Art History.

In conjunction with its exhibition program at CAM, the IRA offers unique opportunities for students to interact with artists, curators and scholars through informal discussions, lectures and interdisciplinary colloquia. It offers directed studies, internships and a Graduate Certificate Program, providing real-life experiences that have valuable significance to the emerging artist. Given this context, students seek and benefit from the dynamic interaction of theory and practice, and fully engage as artists though the occasion of the annual MFA Graduation Exhibition.

In 2012, USFCAM is proud to showcase *Sand in the Vacuum*, with projects by Biff Bolen, Megan Hildebrandt, Jay Hollick, Sarah Kelly, Shane M. Maberry, Forrest MacDonald, Cynthia Mason, Taylor Pilote, Scott Rosenberg, and Serhat Tanyolacar. Congratulations to these students, the School of Art and Art History faculty and staff, friends, and the community that support the artists in this first distinguished milestone in their professional careers. *Sand in the Vacuum* marks the sixth annual MFA Graduation Exhibition to be presented at USFCAM.

I thank the CAM staff for their collaborative spirit in presenting this often challenging exhibition, notably Tony Palms, who is responsible for its design in consultation with the students and Neil Bender and John Byrd, Graduate Student Advisors and Associate Professors in the School of Art and Art History, and Wallace Wilson, Director. Don Fuller is recognized for his creative expertise as demonstrated in the exhibition graphics, web, and this catalogue; Shannon Annis, Peter Foe, and Vincent Kral for practical and installation assistance; and of course David Waterman, for his patience and wit throughout the activity.

Members of the Institute are recognized for their extended efforts to realize the exhibition and related events: Margaret Miller, Director; Amy Allison, Jennifer Andrews, Jane Simon, Noel Smith, Kristin Soderqvist, Megan Voeller and Randall West.

Alexa Favata | Associate Director
USF Institute for Research in Art



Biff Bolen

Columbia, South Carolina
BA (2001) Painting, Newberry College

I feel that painting should be a translation of human thought put into human action. I see both of these things as something to be embraced, as opposed to eliminated. I don't have a specific visual theme or style that I am allegiant to, instead I realize that I am a confident, insecure, dominant, shy, outgoing, passive, often confused, and always incorrect person, and hope that the paintings will reflect and relate that which is the embodiment, or at least acknowledgement, of a humanity.

Megan Hildebrandt
Walled Lake, Michigan
BFA (2006) University of Michigan



Being diagnosed with cancer in 2009 intensified my need to document my life via autobiographical drawings. I work to comprehend mortality and vitality. I am interested in physical and psychological endurance, and the ways in which we document the passage of time. My oncologist recently informed me that at age 27, I have been exposed to 16 lifetimes worth of radiation due to my cancer treatment regimen, which involved many head and neck CT scans. This was alarming news.

Counting radiation on paper is a way of controlling my fear. I am counting to harness it, tallying to transform it. To repeat a mark is to move a step further toward taming my history and future. To represent an invisible harm is to erase it, to exorcise it. I am tallying time, drawing a large desert that shifts perspectives: a landscape that rolls, tumbles, and caves in.



Jay Hollick

Richland, Washington

BFA (2008) Central Washington University

Through graphite drawing I attempt to map the relationship between myself and my hometown. I am interested in the history of my birthplace and the part my town has played in the production of atomic weapons. Post-Cold War the town has become the site of a giant environmental cleanup; this history was the backdrop for my youth as I grew up and created my own personal narrative under its shadow. The maps I create explore the relationship between narratives and how my personal history intertwines with the greater past of home.



Sarah Kelly

Tampa, Florida

BA (2008) Film and Media Arts, University of Tampa

Through the combination of video and performance, I not only aim to investigate and critique the natural attraction I have to popular culture, but I also aim to establish a sense of connectivity between the viewer and myself; a connectivity that perhaps has been lost due to the opulence of media. The intention of my work is to recognize my identity within the constructs of popular culture that captivate me, while simultaneously activating my audience to become aware of their own identities within the confines of seemingly unavoidable popular archetypes such as film, television, social networking and music.

Against the backdrop of electronic and internet culture my work is driven by the cultural democracy of those mediated experiences. My interests lie within the questioning and embracement of these electronic realities that have transformed our social experiences into a new duality where the virtual is now merged with the brick and mortar. My work draws a parallel to this duality in which the viewer is actively implicated into a larger scene by their choice to interface with my work if they wish to experience the embedded media.



Shane M. Maberry
Dallas, Texas
BFA (2009) University of Houston

**Recipe for disaster****Prep:** 4.8 Billion years**Cook Time:** Ready in minutes**Serving:** 7 Billion plus

These insidiously seductive annihilation landscapes can be whipped together in minutes in the discomfort of your own home and seem like you baked for hours. Serve with honey mixed in softened butter and get ready for the compliments.

Ingredients

5 kilos

4405 ml

1 flake

1 ton

8 oodles

2 mega grams

9 Megafonzie

2 Barns

Intolerance

Helplessness (can substitute Resignation but double the amount)

Reality (can substitute imagination if out of reality, no one will notice)

Stupidity (can substitute apathy use same amount)

Glorification

Self-absorption

Sensationalism

Anxiety

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients until hard narrow minded dough forms
2. Place dough on native lands and wipe out the indigenous plants, animals and population
3. Roll dough and separate into 3 equally closed minded units of divisive organized religions
4. Bake in fossil fuel powered preheated 400 degree oven for 10-12 minutes
5. Serve to one percent of the population but charge everyone

My work uses installation, painting and sculpture to create coded systems of power and structure existing on the fringes of reality. My interest lies in exploiting the contradiction between what we know to be there and what we actually see. Materials such as paint, hair, paper towels, pins, wood, hot glue, gold leaf, aluminum foil and porcelain become explorations of societal value systems. I use painted surfaces to mask what is below, like faux facades hiding what is secret or hidden beneath. My work is a parallel to the hidden classifications of power, and the ambiguous yet regulated framework of our visual environment.



I am a shop rat. My father was an automotive paint and body man by trade; consequently I grew up quite literally in the shop. Through my engagement with custom automotive and motorcycle culture and the use of the technical skill set inherent to them, I create a platform in which to explore contemporary issues and describe them visually through material. This engagement ultimately leads to the exploration of what it means to be a young, reckless male navigating through contemporary culture with high art interests and a low brow upbringing.



Taylor Pilote

Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada

BFA (2009) University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada



Throughout the making process, the initial interest and expanded ambiguity of the object becomes the life of the piece. This ambiguity is worked out formally and it is what separates my rendition from the original. This occurs from a slippage of the hand, the accepted limitations of the materials that I use, and a personal relationship with my imagery. This physical slippage is mirrored by a conceptual slippage that is created through accumulations of things and their presentation.

The viewer must make sense of these normal everyday things placed in awkward contexts, usurped by scale manipulation, color exaggeration, enhanced surface quality, or unlikely material choice. The formal, material, and presentational strategies that I use eliminate function and make these objects "wrong", leaving the viewer with more questions than answers. Expanding our role as subjective viewers.



Serhat Tanyolaçar

Ankara, Turkey

BFA (2008) Austin Peay State University

BFA (2002) Bilkent University, Turkey

The chicken or the egg causality dilemma is commonly stated as “which came first, the chicken or the egg?” To ancient philosophers, the question about the first chicken or egg also evoked the questions of how life and the universe in general began. This universal causality dilemma leads a critique of political and social corruption which takes away all fundamental human rights from citizens of nation states.

The eggs represent two different ideologies which give birth to each other. Screen printed images on the shroud under the white egg are 22 Turkish born journalists and political figures who have been murdered by state controlled contra-guerilla forces since 1978 in democratic and secular Republic of Turkey.

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