

The University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *Stagecraft: Brian Bress, Deville Cohen, Kate Gilmore, Mary Reid Kelley*. *Stagecraft* brings together a group of artists who share an impulse to re-imagine and re-script our relationships to everyday objects and characters against the backdrop of theater and performance. Working with a do-it-yourself directness across the fields of sculpture, theater, performance, cinematography and animation, the artists in *Stagecraft* delve into absurdity to make the familiar strange once again. In the process, they present us with skillful meditations on art-making itself. The exhibition was curated by David Louis Norr and organized by USFCAM.



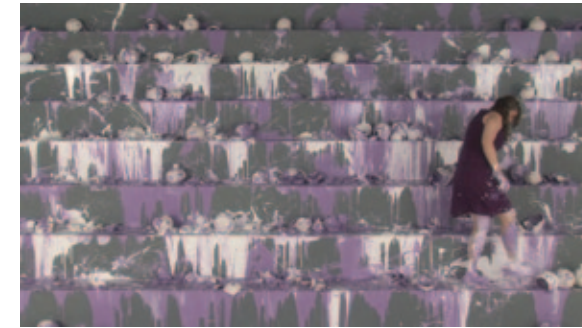
**Brian Bress, *Creative Ideas for Every Season*, 2010**

For his most recent video, *Creative Ideas for Every Season*, Brian Bress fabricated the set of a moon-like mountainous landscape in his Los Angeles studio. Traveling through the landscape in a cardboard jalopy, his female protagonist imagines a series of fantastical characters—among them a yeti-like monster who dines on a plate of spaghetti and a creature covered in wooden beads—whom she engages with deadpan earnestness in conversations about happiness and creativity during an interminable road trip. Bress himself plays the auto mechanic who emerges from the car's smoking dashboard to reveal the absurd source of his "creative ideas for every season."



**Deville Cohen, *Grayscale*, 2009–2010**

Shot in three locations including an empty parking lot at night and a black box theater staged in the artist's studio, Deville Cohen's *Grayscale* offers a glimpse of the secret lives of office supplies, or the antics of a cryptic theater troupe with a penchant for Xerox machines. In the video, anonymous men in high-heeled shoes enact a perplexing drama with unusual props (a photocopied zebra, handfuls of pushpins) that climax in an act of furious destruction. Inviting viewers to project themselves into *Grayscale's* carbon-copied world, the artist also extends the video's environment outward with an installation that includes an architectural curtain of cut paper.



**Kate Gilmore, *Buster*, 2011**

For *Stagecraft*, USFCAM commissioned Kate Gilmore to create *Buster*, a work that fuses video, performance and installation in the museum's Leavengood Gallery. Like many of her past projects, *Buster* documents Gilmore's experience enduring a physical challenge of her own conception. Working with USFCAM staff and MFA students from the School of Art and Art History, Gilmore planned for a massive stepped platform painted gray and loaded with ceramic vessels constructed by her collaborators. Donning a purple dress and ballet flats, she descended the structure (in the resulting videotaped performance) and, in the space of several minutes, broke and smashed more than two hundred vessels to spill the white and violet paint contained inside. Gilmore unleashes color over the steps of the installation, humorously engaging the histories of minimalist sculpture, modernist painting, and the gendered stereotypes of art making in general.



**Mary Reid Kelley, *You Make Me Iliad*, 2010**

Mary Reid Kelley's *You Make Me Iliad* defies conventions of historical narrative. Her video focuses on two invented characters in German-occupied Belgium at the end of World War I: a young soldier, who despite his distaste for bloodshed aspires to write an epic tale of war rivaling Homer's Iliad, and a Belgian prostitute, both performed by Reid Kelley. The script, written in rhyming iambic pentameter, follows the soldier through a hand-drawn landscape in black-and-white, intercut with stop-motion animations of text, as he pursues what his burgeoning epic lacks—a heroine. The video culminates in an encounter between the soldier and the prostitute, who dashes the youth's grandiose notions of his poetic endeavor in a luridly punning dialogue on sex, war and the classics.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Brian Bress is a Los Angeles-based artist and filmmaker. Born in Norfolk, VA, in 1975, Bress received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1998 and his MFA from University of California, Los Angeles in 2006. In 2011, his work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at the Flint Institute of Arts (Flint, MI) and the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art (Rancho Cucamonga, CA). Group exhibitions include *Video Art: Replay*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; "*Now that I'm by myself, she says, 'I'm not by myself, which is good,'*" DiverseWorks, Houston; *Against The Grain*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles; and *California Video: Artists and Histories*, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Deville Cohen was born in Tel Aviv in 1977. He received his KHB in 2007 from Weisensee Kunsthochschule in Berlin, Germany, and his MFA from Bard Collage in 2010. He has exhibited internationally, including solo shows at Nowhere Gallery in Milan, Italy, and tor111 in Berlin, Germany. In 2010, his work was featured in Greater New York at MoMA PS1, The Company in Los Angeles, California, and Lesley Heller Workspace in New York City. He currently lives and works in New York City.

Video and performance artist Kate Gilmore was born in Washington D.C. in 1975 and lives and works in New York City. Gilmore received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and her BA from Bates College, Maine. Her work has been featured in recent exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art (Whitney Biennial 2010); MoMA/P.S.1 (Greater New York: 5 Year Review); Brooklyn Museum; The Kitchen; Vassar College; and Indianapolis Museum of Art. Gilmore has had solo exhibitions at Bryant Park; Locust Projects; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Franco Soffiantino Arte Contemporanea; Smith-Stewart Gallery; White Columns; and Artpace. Her work belongs to collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Artist Mary Reid Kelley works across video, animation, painting and performance. Born in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1979, she received an MFA in painting from Yale University in 2009. Recent exhibitions include Pilar Corrias, London, 2011; SITE Santa Fe 8th International Biennial Exhibition, 2010; Susanne Vielmetter Projects, Los Angeles, 2010; and Fredericks & Freiser Gallery, New York, 2009. Reid Kelley currently lives and works in Saratoga Springs in upstate New York.

**EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**

Brian Bress  
*Creative Ideas for Every Season*, 2010  
High definition video, color, sound  
Courtesy of the Artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA

Brian Bress  
*A River*, 2009  
Color lightjet print  
32 x 40 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA

Deville Cohen  
*Grayscale (A video in three acts)*, 2009–2010  
HD video, paper  
18 minutes  
Courtesy of the Artist

Kate Gilmore  
*Buster*, 2011  
Wood, ceramics and house paint  
10 ½ x 30 x 11 feet  
HD video  
7 minutes, 40 seconds  
Courtesy of the Artist  
USFCAM Commission 2011

Mary Reid Kelley  
*Prostitute*, 2010  
Collage of charcoal, ink and acrylic on paper  
19 ¾ x 15 ½ inches  
Courtesy of the Artist and Susanne Vielmetter  
Los Angeles Projects

Mary Reid Kelley  
*Soldier*, 2010  
Collage of charcoal, ink and acrylic on paper  
22 ½ x 19 ½ inches  
Courtesy of the Artist and Susanne Vielmetter  
Los Angeles Projects

Mary Reid Kelley  
*You Make Me Iliad*, 2010  
Black and white digital video, sound  
14 minutes, 49 seconds  
Courtesy of the Artist

Cover and inside cover - Detail of Kate Gilmore, *Buster*, 2011. photo: Will Lytch/Graphicstudio

**USF Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa**  
**June 10 – September 10, 2011**

***STAGECRAFT***  
**Brian Bress**  
**Deville Cohen**  
**Kate Gilmore**  
**Mary Reid Kelley**

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