Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts

2012
their understanding of what is happening out there, what artists are thinking about, what art world trends are beginning to emerge—and can do so whenever and from wherever, one of the true promises of an ever-expanding and globalizing world. Whether we are maximizing or over-saturating is debatable. Simultaneously, as the Internet becomes an ever more prevalent artistic and curatorial tool, one has to question what gets lost in translation. Can one ever truly even begin to understand an artist and his or her work without actually being in his or her presence, and can digital perception ever do the art justice?

I became particularly aware of these questions and my reliance on the web as a way to see art and learn about artists when presented with the opportunity to meet with and explore the work of 32 artists who will be conferred a Masters degree in Fine Art from Indiana University this spring. These studio visits were planned to take place over the span of two and a half days in January. Previous visiting essayists have likened their experience to speed dating. Originally, I imagined the format to be more akin to web browsing—essentially, clicking around a bit, exploring studios as if they were galleries of images, downloading and reading artist statements, and CVs. With such a short amount of time to learn as much as possible about each person and his or her work, process, influences, and history, it seemed far less overwhelming to think of the campus as a de facto website, an aggregator of artist’s images, organized and displayed to maximize the user’s - in this case my - experience of them, as to digest and process them and then write about what I had seen and felt. It seemed as I flew across the country that this would be the only possible way to accomplish all that needed to be done in a way that would hold up. It was immediately obvious that this was not to be the case. The first issue was that the approximately thirty minutes of face-to-face time spent with each artist in his or her studio went by much more quickly than anyone involved had anticipated. Entering, as a stranger, the world of someone who had been so focused for the last two or three years, dependent on which department he or she was in, and asking them to explain what he or she had been doing in a sentence or two felt inappropriate and the responses rehearsed. So, rather, statements began to turn to questions and key words and ideas, which then began to meander to influences and biography and narrative—and just as the artist and his or her work in its entirety began to come into focus, time would end. Regardless, I began to realize, even in its incompleteness, the understanding of what I had just seen was all the more great because of the interaction between artist and curator.

The second issue was the realization, or perhaps remembrance, that there is a vastness between simply seeing someone’s work and getting to know it. It’s like the difference between a film trailer and a full-length movie: you can gather the plot from either, and although the first takes much less time, the latter is all the more enjoyable. You can look at a painting (or sculpture, or print, etc.) pretty quickly and describe it, make assumptions about why it is the way it is, think about who may have influenced what part of it and ultimately decide upon how you relate to it. People do this in museums and galleries, and especially on the web, every day. But seeing work at length and in person alters the understanding of it visually and conceptually, especially when you have access to the artist and can begin to understand the
narrative behind its creation. I don’t think this is due to some Benjaminian concept of the aura but, rather, just being in the presence of the work—walking around it, getting close and then far away, allowing the work to unfold as one moves through studio windows, and then doing this again with a completely different body of work by a different person in a different studio.

When the next debate surrounding the usefulness of an MFA inevitably arises, as it seems to do every year, I will definitely consider the experience I had over that weekend. Where else does an artist have the opportunity to create freely but also become part of a community of print makers, designers, sculptors, ceramists, painters, digital artists and metal smiths working in the studios of the university? It’s critical that young creators are able to meet young thinkers and that MFA programs continue to provide this access to their students. It may seem almost impossible that such interactions would cease to occur or that a reminder even be needed, yet it’s something that should be considered. Reflecting on a lecture I gave while on campus, I now realize that I spoke as if I had learned all the hopes for the future, the family narratives, the interior monologues, the visceral connections to craft that push art beyond collections of marks, movements, and material?

In addition to Lee, each print maker created work that surprised and intrigued me, much of which seemed to explore physical, three-dimensional spaces within the confines of a predominantly two-dimensional medium. The counterpoints between the intensely calculated, almost Cubist, architectural renderings in charcoal of Rasy Ramirez with works that creates his own spaces—that he called “spaces to pretend in,” within structural collage and alternative photographic processes. Her prints that weave sensitive and expert observational drawing of challenging spaces, often junkyards or decaying barns, thus exposing their more physical materiality of clay. Katz often pushes his material past its physical limits; the glibness of unfiltered information thrown at us daily. Austrian artist David Katz often pushes his material past its physical limits in his temporary, room-scale installations, exposing his interest in how the landscape of clay is a landscape that shifts and cracks as it dries, revealing its sub-structural armature, a}

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shows how one can also find rigid, archetypal forms pushed against more soft, human forms, the form becoming about how to resolve conflicts between opposing sensibilities.

I found solace in seeing how much of the production of the graphic design department was still made by hand. Many of the designers’ works incorporated age-old techniques—like bookbinding and letterpress printing, however in often refreshing contemporary ways. For example, Kevin Steele’s movable books utilize dimension to enhance communication. For Steele, content dictates his book’s form, and it is the form that creates a compelling narrative. While he often employs traditional techniques—such as hand painting, wax transfer, and letterpress—and historical references, these are reinterpreted using modern shapes. A perfect example of this can be seen in his panoramic book depicting the rise of the Dolomite Mountains from grass-green hills to snow-capped rocky peaks that can be arranged by the viewer as he or she likes. The bright colors, bold, simple shapes, and tactile materials found in the work of Leyla Salamova speak to her interest in designing primarily for children. Her well-designed objects, including fairytale movie posters and a plush-felt book, clearly communicate knowledge and provide an outlet for fantasy, creating a body of work that chronicles human development, Corrinne Prestons primary interest is in using design as a catalyst to globally promote social change, what she calls “designing for good.” With a deep interest in travel and a global perspective, her work questions how communication design can change the world. Using unique combinations of both traditional and digital media, Cathy Cihelkiewicz creates work with unexpected results that play with textures and

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flexible, dense against transparent—which help highlight how we perceive difference. Castellan is also interested in the perception of natural phenomena like time and gravity. The first connection I found in the diminutive, delicately crafted and hyper-realistic paintings of Betty Parker was to medieval devotional or icon painting. Her often instantly recognizable subject matter—incorporating references to the popular culture of film and television and the universal nostalgia attached to it—only made this connection more vibrant. Pulling concepts from storyboards and film stills, Parker speaks to our reverence for media, its ecumenical and collective nature and the companionship one often finds in the characters we encounter on the small and large screens. The ambiguous, deconstructed landscapes of Ben Tinsley combine abstraction and realism. Within them he contrasts and layers textures, perspective and surface, and shapes and colors. Often beginning with collage, his surfaces oscillate between heaviness and weightlessness, and his experimentations on the canvas between hard and soft edges and icy or lunar backgrounds make for interesting contrasts with his highly intentional and slowly built areas of color up front. Appropriating his absurdist titles from local want ads, Shane Rodems then takes the cues within and interprets and expands them into multidimensional, multimedia found object-oriented paintings. Photographing his work in situ in the studio, Rodems then prints and juxtaposes two-dimensional and three-dimensional versions of his work. The saturated color and fluid movement of the characters in the paintings of Spencer Corbett may appear at first glance to be celebrations of the joys of excess but could also be understood as social critiques. Nevertheless, there remains a hint of joy within his palette and in the playfulness that exists between his abstracted backgrounds and loose figuration.

During my visit, I was asked to speak to students on a topic of my choosing. I chose to attempt to answer the question with which many artists begin their careers: how do I get my work seen and shown? For what I think are very good reasons, I suggested they spend as much time thinking about their virtual space as their interactions in the real world, building useable websites, working on blogs, as a way to share what they have been working on. I don’t want to take back all the web- and social networking-heavy advice I gave during my talk at Indiana University. I still believe in the promises of technology and the positive impact it can have on the communication of art and ideas, especially for the emerging artist. Yet, looking back, I would reiterate the importance of physical interaction with one’s work and remind each of them, despite the fact that I left it out of my list of hints, that speaking about one’s work in person is equally important as writing about it online. I would add a reminder that even if you have the best-designed galleries on your personal homepage or the most visited blog on the web, the communities you build around yourself and your work are perhaps even more important. In an age where many have become desensitized to the act of oversharing, the sensitivity and thoughtfulness imparted by each person onto his or her practice become a reminder as to why we create things to begin with—and then it dawned on me that one of the best places to overshare is right there in the studio. I want to thank the artists mentioned here for sharing their stories and reminding me of how important it is to communicate in real time, in real life.

David Harper, Brooklyn, NY, February 2012

David Harper is a curator and critic living and working in Brooklyn, NY. He currently runs the visual art program at the Brooklyn Academy of Music while curating exhibitions independently for galleries and institutions worldwide. Recently he was Associate Visiting Curator at the Austrian Cultural Forum, New York. He also served as the first curatorial fellow for the noted art blog Art Fag City and his reviews have appeared most recently on Art Agenda.
Personal experience, the mundane, and the temporality of memory are recurring influences in my work. I am currently using paper because it is a common vehicle for the collection and passing along of a story and the moments we try to remember. Not unlike memory, despite being handled with care, the temporality and fragility of the material will eventually become apparent and over time will slowly be destroyed and fade, along with the details once represented.
I am curious about the physical world, the fact that I exist within it, and the fact that it will continue on after I die. Life is full of visceral sensations that reason cannot touch, and words cannot explain. How do we, as humans, make sense of the world around us? Using combinations of paint, fabric, and embroidery, I explore relationships between image, structure, repetition, and perception. I mix the flexible with the firm, the shiny with the dull, the labored with the spontaneous, and the actual with the illusion. These rhythms, tensions, and material transitions are slow pleasures—to be savored again and again, without a rush for meaning.

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My work always starts with pencil—drawing as thinking and the way to get my ideas out. I execute my work in traditional and digital media exploring immediacy of mark making, symbolism, sexuality and duality of the nature and the world. I am interested in the non-verbal communication that compliments and clarifies the typographic message and helps cross language barriers.

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I am a careful and constant observer. I probably enjoy social gatherings for a different reason than most people, as I am more interested in interacting as a passive witness than as the life of the party. The psychology of "mob mentality" has always fascinated me, especially when the mob is influenced by catalysts like hormones, sexual angst, and booze. When it ignites, the abandonment of decent judgment and loss of inhibitions is both exciting and very frightening. My paintings are both a critique and a celebration of this phenomenon. As I comment on a variety of subjects from our society’s obsession and dependence on digital media, lust for what we don’t have, and the general recklessness of human nature, I attempt to be just as self-critical as socially critical. The shameless characters in my paintings reinforce an overwhelming suspicion that human beings are as much propelled toward primal impulse as they are concerned with achieving civilized man. My paintings surrender to this impulse rather than trying to escape it.
For two years I have photographed Ivy, my lover and confidant, my muse. What began as a visceral documentation of falling in love progressed into a series of images about our unique version of intimacy; showing daily experiences that are both ordinary and eccentric. This series is the beginning of an on-going chronology of our partnership – the honest documentation of an intimate relationship from the very beginning.

I use the panoramic format to physically invite the viewer into our spaces, to expose private moments not because they are extraordinary, but because they tell our story. While each moment and interaction is genuine, the images strike a balance between fact and fiction. Ivy’s mannerisms and personality are truthful, but the scene is carefully constructed. To create each image, I combine a number of different frames, shot from a variety of different angles, and seamlessly combine them in Adobe Photoshop to create an otherwise impossible image. With this technique I reveal important details in our environment that illuminate the moment. Without Ivy’s willingness to reveal her personality and love, these images would not be possible. This series marks the beginning of a lifelong collaboration between Ivy and I.

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Ma’s Neighborhood
Archival Inkjet Print
18 x 72 in & 9 x 20 in

Mirrors
Archival Inkjet Print
15 x 72 in

Makeup
Archival Inkjet Print
16 x 72 in

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Being creative is a lifestyle. A 24/7 way of looking at the world: when I dress myself in the morning, arrange the food on my plate or place my new sofa in the living room, I am a designer, a creative problem solver. Graphic design is not only artistic expression but also an extension of my voice. It is a powerful medium that can educate, motivate, promote and interact with the intended audience. It is the vehicle that allows me to directly impact my community. It has a profound function in my life and I use my design skills in all aspects of everyday life. My motivation is personal satisfaction received by choosing work that is meaningful that fits my core values and by providing quality design solutions.

I can remember when I was a little girl, on a family trip, driving through long stretches of countryside. My mother staring out the window began to describe what she was seeing. "Look at the stormy ‘Payne’s gray’ sky and how it reflects in the puddles of the freshly over turned ‘Van Dyke brown’ field." My mother, an accomplished expressive watercolor painter, was painting what she was watching go by. What does she see? How does she see? This is when I began to “look.”

Simplicity is important to my design. I believe boiling down complex visual information to the simplest form creates timeless, classic design. It is easily recognized and translates quickly yet provides clues to deeper meaning. Ultimately, the complexity of my design solutions is based on the audience and the message.
Emotions can have the power to override sound logical arguments, so much so that they are presented and perceived as proven logic. In these situations, recognizing the difference between logic and emotion can be extremely challenging. I am interested in pointing out this difference by taking commonplace and familiar situations, and twisting an element of that situation into the unfamiliar and absurd. This absurdity lends itself to a dark kind of humor, giving a way to begin reconciling this overturning of reality. Through this subtle shifting of reality and the use of humor, an entrance into the work is provided, giving an intriguing space to think and look longer on the work and the conflict it seeks to reveal. In this body of work I am trying to achieve this subtlety through the comfort of narrative, recognition of posture and form, and familiarity of scale and environment. The sculptures are ceramic leviathans, frozen in the recognizable and awkward behaviors of cats and dogs, set with objects that imply a comfortable home. In presenting absurd situations using these elements, I am seeking to acknowledge this contradiction between how the urban and suburban American pet owners (of which I am one) see the animals that live in their homes, and the way they see, or refuse to see, the animals they eat. Why are some considered worthy of love and family, while others are considered duds of meat? These decisions strike me as completely arbitrary and without logical reason. Even so, these classifications are passionately defended, to the point of fiercely denying facts and filling gaps in knowledge with emotional rhetoric. By subtly inserting these ceramic objects into the comfort of the home, an ideal that many people hold as a sacred space, I hope to bypass such knee jerk reactions thus encouraging recognition of our absurdities and contrary nature.

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Ceramics

What Are We Doing Now?
Ceramic, found objects

Climbing
Ceramic, found objects

CLimbing (detail)
Ceramic, found objects
For several years now, I have worked almost exclusively through drawing architectural landscapes as my subject matter. I am attracted to drawing spaces that are overly cluttered or architecturally complex, and I experience them through drawing. Through my printmaking practice, my observational drawings are deconstructed, layered, and built up again so to experiment with the elements of line, space, and structure.

Recently I began using these architectural spaces to explore psychological space. My hope was to explore the complexity of family dynamics, warped perception, and the ambiguous nature of memory. To investigate these themes, there is play between reality versus fantasy, clarity versus ambiguity, distortion, layering and even hidden imagery. My work suddenly became much more narrative; using spaces and metaphors that are derived directly from my youth and past relationships. I now consider the structures and spaces I build to be portraits rather than landscapes – that in a sense, they represent a person’s psyche and the variety of emotions, fears, and thoughts that take place not only within, but around them.

I am careful to consider how the structural integrity of each “portrait” can appropriately represent the person’s relationships and their state of mind – is the structure warped? Sturdy? Deteriorated or decayed? Is it drawn with clarity or ambiguity? How does light and darkness interact with the space?

Ultimately this body of work is an exploration of psychological space, and an inquiry of how these themes work on both individual and universal levels. How open ended can a narrative be, that is so personal and specific? My hope is that through sharing my personal history in a way that is open yet guarded, my viewers can elicit their own story.

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The past is the intersection of what we believe happened and the remaining tangible objects of those occurrences. We save objects not necessarily for any specific value, but because they are a link to the past, a touchstone to a fragile memory we feel we will lose without ‘proof’: a simple ‘thing’ to remember other things. The past comes to light, through letters, tools, books, and household items. It is a strange inheritance, reached through digging, and found in fragments.

Some things are clear and understandable; others are opaque and lost in the oral tradition that is family history. There is no clear time-line, only fragmented stories, but there is a lineage; there is a place we come from.

This body of work explores the wonder and frustration that we feel when we dig into the past, the sense of continuity, but also the complete incomprehension. These objects have meaning because others have touched them, and they are strange and contradictory. I cannot carve, yet, the wood my grandfather saved, although I use his tools to make my own work now. For the viewer there is a different story, based on their own discrete and separate history with objects and place; but there is shared information that translates and transfers through our relationships with made things.

In this work, I am exploring not only memories, but also what it means to remember, and what it means, or does not mean, if that memory is false. In the end, what we remember is what exists, and what has existed. This work looks at the different ways that we arrange the objects of our memory to reach a place of truth, at least a subjective truth, about the past and our place in it.

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What is left to me
Mixed Media
20 x 60 x 6 in

What is left to me
Mixed Media
20 x 60 x 6 in

What is left to me
Mixed Media
20 x 60 x 6 in
We as a species currently live within an infinite web of self-generated connections and systems of organization. I am fascinated with the relationship between human beings and our cultural creation, which has led me to investigate how the physical boundaries of our fabricated environment direct the ways we live. I am curious about the implications of these fabricated structures and superficial systems as mediating influences on our lives that we have become dependent for our survival. I believe that these dependencies have created a quasisymbiotic relationship between humans and the structures and systems we build.

With my work I explore different points of stasis within the fluctuating synchrony between humans and our cultural output. I embrace the symbolic representation of grid as a metaphor to represent the rectilinear systems of spatial division that increasingly determine our visual environment. Multiple interspersed gridded structures connected through webs of organization suggest the expansiveness and complexity of the overall system of human culture and occupancy. The works explore the limitations of the architectural spaces they fill, serving as abstract representations of our cultural tendencies of colonization within our own constructed realities.

My hope is to reveal some clarity on the benefits and drawbacks of our self-generated positive feedback loop, bringing into question the implications of our cultural dependency on the things we invent. the complexity of the systems in which we exist, and our tendency to create order given the freedom of uncharted territory.
Using traditional craft techniques that my relatives have practiced as a starting point for this body of work, my goal is to combine the nostalgia I feel for these techniques and merge it with my own unique set of skills as a contemporary jeweler. By combining sewing, quilting, embroidery, crochet and knitting with pierced, filed, and fabricated metal elements I am able to connect with my family’s past while adding my present voice as I create objects to leave for my future family. Thus, by using my own techniques and practices my goal is to establish a link with my family traditions through the objects I create.

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This work began with a feeling more than an idea; the feeling of calm and joy that I experience while observing the people and places that I love, or while making art. I become aware of another realm inside me: the Void, a realm that is serene, empty, unchanging, and infinite. Each of my images is veiled by this realm, veiled by the calm Void. My art synthesizes my interests in printmaking, alternative photography, video, and drawing. I make print and video installations as well as variable editions that depict small moments of awareness and connection. The alchemy of connection coupled with time and activity is the praxis of my personal search.
My work explores daydream spaces through the use of large-scale printmaking methods. I employ scale shifts as both theme and process by enlarging small moments from one piece to form the basis of another, creating vast, dreamlike spaces. Finding the big in the small has become a metaphor for daydreaming for me.

I begin with small, simple, observational drawings, scan and alter them digitally, enlarge them onto etching or lithographic plates, etch and re-etch them, scrape away, build back up, reshape, layer. I change the images over many iterations, allowing for landscapes to emerge and transform as I alternate between letting the space reveal itself and autoritatively shaping it.

In the end, the resulting pieces no longer reflect their original sources. They depict abstracted, emotional, and psychological landscapes, peopled with strange figures, objects, and architectural elements. Although the pieces have their own internal logic, I hope that their ambiguity leaves each viewer with a different impression of what the place is based on her own experiences. Likewise, they convey emotions open to interpretation: sadness, contemplation, awe, calm, solitude, hope, or a sense of searching.

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There are two kinds of summer.

She paddled at night, when the moon was full, pretending she was an alligator.

She ran barefoot, as fast as she could, in a skirt.

She swam in the ocean, when the double rainbows were right above the sea, and a lot, a lot of jellyfishes.

She said she is jealous that other people’s souls are so colorful and full of shapes, but hers are transparent, with no shape, like water.

She painted.

It is never about the paintings.

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In some form, pharmaceuticals have always surrounded me. My family used to own and operate the local pharmacy in town, which is now, ironically, out of business.

This series initially started when I was thinking about my own personal health a couple years ago and my need for medication to function on a daily basis. I take medication for several different ailments to prevent pain and cure deficiencies in my body. There is no way that I could function without the pharmaceutical industry. Despite the fact that pills make me feel better, I wish I didn’t have to rely on them to be free from pain and discomfort.

What happens if these medications aren’t available from the manufacturers anymore or what if the average person can no longer afford their monthly regimen of medications? My fear is that eventually these medications are going to fail or somehow will no longer be available. At any point the FDA could remove drugs from the market due to interactions or adverse side effects. If these medications have an “expiration” date attached to them, I can’t be dependent upon them on a long-term basis.

Modern medicine revolves around the theory that there is a pill for every ill. In general our society has become accustomed to having a drug to cure deficiencies and not fix initial health problems. Drugs have this promise to cure and people believe in the industry regardless of all the warnings and alerts.

In my work, I have a mix of found scenes and created ones. Shooting in pharmacies has given the viewer a taste of the unknowns. They can see what is behind the scenes including prescription files, drug stock, etc. By viewing everything in bulk, it comments on consumerism and the need for these items.
In my current work I’m investigating the unstable space between paper as surface and paper as object. How can lines, forms, and colors on a paper’s surface interact with the physical manipulation of the paper in real space? My goal is a constant oscillation, an inherent instability between the pictorial and the sculptural.

My work references diverse sources, including intimate places from my past, architectural models, formal abstraction, and digital methods of image generation. Some pieces are carefully planned and some are more spontaneous, but in each case I work to temper intuition and playfulness with exact control of the finished structure.

It is within the dynamic space between—between picture and sculpture, between precision and playfulness—that I hope the viewer will explore these works.

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Printmaking

ANDREW MAURER

Bridge
Digital Print and Wood on Paper

Unfolded
Ink, Acrylic and Wood on Paper

Yellow
Woodcut, Ink on Paper, Acrylic on Panel
My work is a hybrid of two perspectives that are both significant elements in my motivation to create. Spending time with my mother while painting in the redwoods and on the coasts of California I developed an aesthetic eye and a reverence for the beauty and strength of nature. Because of my father’s influence I developed an equal, but very different, aesthetic and an interest in machines of every size and shape as well as a curiosity of material and how it is processed.

The presence of this work reveals a meditation on the processing of the natural world by human kind. By juxtaposing manmade materials and process with abstract forms inspired by the flowing lines and subtle nuance of landscape, I create a visual and conceptual representation of both the engine of human progress and the natural world that sustains it. By contrasting the organic with the manufactured, I question my position between the natural and industrial world. I often find myself torn between my reverence for nature and my love of machinery. Through my work I have found a place where both can coexist, resulting in simple forms that imply organization, repetition, pattern and scale. This work evokes the economic, social, and political conditions of a fully industrialized world, through the material and process, and incorporates the natural world through free flowing abstractions of the subtle nuance of nature. By combining classical and contemporary methods of construction I am able to create sculptures with a persistence of dialogue, both internal and external to its nature.

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A number of my works use ancient cultures and technologies as a point of contrast to our contemporary culture. I feel as though indigenous cultures like the Kwakiutl of the Pacific Northwest or the Maya of the Yucatan peninsula represent lost archives of great knowledge. I rail against the notion of the primitive, as the word suggests its placement at the bottom of an artificial hierarchy. We are undoubtedly in a greatly advanced position in terms of scientific achievement, but I fail to see a social, spiritual or cultural advancement from what we have had in the past. Our knowledge of the past is directly linked to the durability of its material culture, which by contrast, brings our current methods of preserving our culture into question.

My thesis show explores my confliction with digital media archives, with its promise of perfect duplication and inevitable degradation. The works exemplify the continuums from personal to public, ancient to contemporary and ephemeral to durable. The digital archive is examined through various states of degradation, obsolescence and stability through replication. While our society so quickly abandons tangibility for transmittance, I examine the potential for losing our own history. What will be known from the archive we leave if it is devoid of context and full of holes through obsolescence?

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MATTHEW MEERS

Doomsday Calendar
CNC routed plywood, charcoal, watercolor
48 x 48 x .5 in

Advanced Technology
Limestone, steel
24 x 20 x 8 in

Rosetta Stone
Limestone, graphite
9.56 x 7.47 x .75 in

Sculpture
In my paintings, I explore the overlap between reality and fiction, life and television. Amidst my regular cast of friends and family members, I have begun to incorporate other people from my childhood memories. These other people, however, were confined within the television in my family’s living room. As I have continued painting these familiar faces, I’ve realized that I feel strong emotions for them, and due to the presence of television in our culture, it is clear that others do as well. The emotions that television inspires in us are real and felt. When many of us respond to television characters, they become common ground on which we can connect. My small marks with oil paint, a medium that was used to immortalize and elevate icons for so long, allow these stills from fast-moving, time-specific television to be thoroughly analyzed at a slow pace. By painting characters from television and film into my small, devotional paintings, I reflect the intimacy and familiarity one can feel when watching these fictional people.

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My work explores a simultaneous fascination and repulsion with the human body as it relates to my sense of memory. I have been painting, drawing and printmaking to create forms built from altered body parts, childhood toys, mechanical renderings, and accidental marks. The bodies built up from these absurd amalgamations signify both fragmented memories and a sense of fantasy. Through my use of the physical processes of printmaking, I create a mutation in which fact and fiction become inseparable. My past is a crucial component to my work, I rely on my imagination to fill in the gaps of broken memories.

I begin my process by creating sketches of a form stripped down to its bare essentials, which I then build back up in excess. I view them as collages, wherein I reconfigure my source materials into new forms to express my simultaneous repulsion and fascination with bodily functions and the painful awareness of our continual biological decay. Like clockwork, human beings are well designed, but ultimately fallible. Alluding to this physiological frailty and imperfection, I exaggerate and invent aspects of our biology, conflating fact with memory. Amid overlapping images, I articulate individual forms, lending them personalities that are both playful and macabre.

My finished works convey states of continual metamorphosis as if forms are alternately frozen in awkward moments, and bursting with explosive energy. Through the use of both random and premeditated line, I convey glimpses of recognizable form alongside blurred and frenetic moments: a congregation of premeditated lines built up alongside random marks to define corporeal space.

My fascination with bodily decay parallels the physically erosive process of etching and excavating an image. As I use the various print methods, removing a particular piece of material or building up layers to reveal a final image, I see how my process and product are inseparable.
I love how graphic design can communicate through various media on a massive scale. How one communicates determines how we feel about everything. Although my cultural point of view is American, my work is globally inspired. I love researching and exploring beyond my familiar surroundings to enhance my techniques, styles, and combinations. Through one’s history, language, music, and beyond, a designer can act as a personal instrument to perform on an international stage to affect change.

I feel design should be used for the betterment of society. Whether it’s conveying simplistic to complicated information or expanding social and personal awareness, it has the power to change the world and improve humanity. My work can be understood as creation that can give back as well as receive a more meaningful relationship with myself. This is what drives me. My life continues to be a process of unfamiliar design.
Secret Wars III situates confrontation between disassociated character sculptures. These abstracted clods are spectacle, condensed from general distraction, lost thoughts and belligerent assemblages of information. The knowledge blitz merges fact and fiction, neon and neutral, intrigue and boredom creating its own world of damaged thought. The ooze that is divulged from these objects becomes the subject: a generality that is deceit deceiving itself.

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My work is an attempt to express psychological and emotional states as spatial images. I seek to make drawings and prints that reside somewhere between recognizable landscapes and composed dream worlds of marks and scrapes, haze and dust. These originated from profound experiences I have had in places such as airports and cathedrals, where the qualities of light and space were enveloping and dreamlike. I attempt to capture this spiritual, vertiginous sensation in my work through recomposing and imbuing these spaces with atmosphere, the sense of air as physical substance, alluding to an unseen presence. Observations of architectural structures serve as a starting point, and become abstracted, transformed, and sometimes obliterated through building and deconstruction, mark-making and erasure. The writings of Jorge Luis Borges spur me to look at the mysteriousness of space indirectly, through its reflections and contradictory features. I find my materials—charcoal, a dirty black dust, and acid, which eats away at metal plates—conceptually consonant with the tenuous and transient nature of perception and memory.

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Accessing personal experience, I seek to create sculpture that will affect viewers in a visceral or emotional way. Through literal and abstract interpretations of the figure, I hope to generate new vantage points from which a viewer can observe the effect of issues and events through my lens. Employing the figure to explore psychological and social phenomena allows me to pinpoint distinctive characteristics of certain people or a certain type of person. I’m most interested in the body’s ability to transform and adapt in reaction to itself or burdens placed upon it.

My most recent work explores my father’s failing health and my ability to cope with the fear of loss. I am interested in channeling distressed emotional states to produce a work that offers a therapeutic outlet with a beautiful byproduct. Though I cannot diagnose, prescribe, or operate, I have the ability to create with the tools and materials at my disposal through sculpture and metaphor. The ritual performed through making gives me a sense of command over issues that, though natural, are essentially beyond my control. With this work, I am offering a sense of hope and relief; for my father, for myself, and for those who long to help in situations beyond their control.

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I tinker and I fiddle. I am interested in seeing the new on my walk to the car or while brushing my teeth. I enjoy when the blue sky bumps up against a red brick building or when a sign has rotted out, leaving its frame to look through. I like the lo-fi, handmade process of things, and prefer analog to digital. I read the Thrifty Nickel. I like the mistakes that happen, there is a sense of humanity but also a sense that nothing will happen after reading the ad. The materials I use are lightly manipulated and still transmit their essence (lo-fi): paint is used to cover not to create illusion, although sometimes it happens aesthetically. I engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a sober or practical purpose and by this play the mind does unexpected things, allowing thought or a new knowledge to exist. Interactivity refers to the painting’s behavior as experienced you. This differs from what you see, how it works or how it’s made, and the meaning. You can play without immediate understanding, but if you are willing to be cooperative and participate, ideas and concepts come to light. When cobbled together these works I imagine how you will take part in them and smile, and maybe laugh loudly and show your friends or you might be mad because they’re not landscapes. You will contemplate what they are and what they mean and maybe just maybe you’ll be right.
Art is the language that doesn’t need translations. As a graphic designer I can create a visual message and communicate with viewers through layers of concepts, symbols, imagery, and text. I can talk to audience and help them to perceive information in a way I need.

For many years I’ve worked with an audience that always needs more attention than others—with children. Working with children expands the role of a graphic designer, because it requires one to be a psychologist, a mentor, an entrepreneur. My thesis is about visual/associative memory and human ability to perceive and memorize information starting from birth. Children are easily affected by what they see, hear, and touch.

They are stimulated by recognizable elements that they can relate to. My intention is to analyze that and create artworks showing an influence of visual memory on children from birth to adult age in a continuous path.

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Movable books and paper engineering are a primary focus of my research and work. While children’s pop up books are a familiar format today, moveable books have a long history of use. Designers as far back as the twelfth century have used paper engineering to provide movement and dimension to better explain complex ideas in astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and other disciplines.

In my design, I consider the choice to utilize dimension or moving pieces in the same way as I make decisions about format, size, text, imagery, and other components. Movable parts and interaction with them add a powerful dimension to communication, which can enhance the message and increase the impact of the work, but must be considered carefully and utilized judiciously so as not to be gratuitous or detract from the work. The content of a book should dictate its structure and design.

Much of my work has involved unusual paper folds, pop-ups, and other moving parts. Movable pages, unconventional bindings, and unique perspectives are an integral part of my process, directing how the reader interacts with the material through manipulation of the structure. My work demonstrates how movable books can be used for viewers of all ages. Interaction with the moveable parts of these books plays an important role in the stories they tell.

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Le Maschere della Commedia dell’Arte
Accordion book

Naughty but Nice
Miniature letterpress book

Val di Funes / Villnöss
Panoramic book

KEVIN STEELE
Graphic design
With the rapid economic development and energy consumption in China, environmental problems such as pollution, smog, and degradation of natural resources have become increasingly serious in this country. I am committed to producing art works that serve as warnings while stimulating thoughts and self-questioning about the negative impact of modern industrial development and the pollution with which it is associated. This is the essence of what I try to articulate and communicate through the art forms of sculpture and installation. I combine traditional sculpture techniques with new media to incorporate additional perspectives into art works and facilitate the realization of my ideas by providing extra choices. For example, I may use lighting combined with shadows to create more dimensional effects; employ sound tracks or videos to give audience additional visual and acoustic perceptions; and construct interactive user interfaces to facilitate communication, understanding, and interaction of audience and art works. My works intend to raise awareness about the need to cherish natural resources as well as advocate the need to adopt meaningful conservation measures to stop the devastation of our planet and save our environment.

xiaoou.iu.edu/~sun8/xiaoou/Welcome.html
My paintings depict introspective scenes that explore the relationship between real and imagined spaces.

Recently, my point of departure has been a deconstructed or hybrid landscape. I am interested in revealing moments of the past, envisioning the future, and experiencing the present depicted as a fictitious reality. Seeking a balance between order and spontaneity. Often making critical decisions which amount to many uncertain outcomes. I am captivated by an organized chaos in the paintings and creating order out of what appears random. The basic framework consists of color, photo references, patterns and gestural strokes. Aiming to build a tension and compression between them. Abstraction representations are elements that participate in the same arena in the process, synthesizing a visual synergy between them. I have been working in a manner where process informs content of the object.

I’m interested in a somewhat recognizable space at times, but also the possibility of constructing imagery that might live solely in the painting itself.
If memories could be preserved and contained, everyone would have their own cabinet of memories. The closest thing we have to this is the photo album. Family heirlooms and relationship relics are simply mundane objects with memories of an idealized past projected onto them. Items become the representation of the intangible, they take on a physical form of nostalgia. I find the importance gained by simple objects due to their location and preservation captivating. The ordinary is transformed by placing it in a collection or containing it.

Accumulation, as a way to gain an understanding and preserve information, has led me to a greater interest in collections. When viewing a collection, memories and histories are sparked relating to the time, location, and topics of the items they contain. Through constructed realities we are distanced from actual truth. When things are taken from their original context and placed alongside other items, unnatural juxtapositions are formed, creating entirely new interpretations.

My thesis work is a portrayal of a pseudo cabinet of curiosity containing specimens discarded by time. The specimen becomes a symbol for the lost. The mode of collecting represents an attempt to contain and control these “memories” before they fade. By constructing my own specimens I am raising the question of authenticity and authority within collections. Using multiple forms of media, I hope to create a more natural experience of observing and organizing a collection. These creatures no longer touched by time are held captive in a static state, a permanent and controlled suspension, they exist beyond time and therefore beyond loss.

Kimberlywaite.com  Kimberly.waite@yahoo.com
My current multimedia work revolves around questions of memory, place, the supernatural, and my own personal history. The daughter of a forensic scientist, I grew up in rural areas, in close proximity to the aftermath of many terrible crimes. Our garage was an at-home forensics laboratory and I often watched my father work on skull reconstructions and fingerprint analyses late into the night.

My creative practice originates in this background. I meticulously collect and catalog evidences of an event or memory in the form of audio field recordings, writing, and video/photographic documentation. The ritual process of investigation and the gathering of clues slowly becomes a meditative and almost spiritual exercise, and all scientific objectivity gives way to emotion, most often expressed through the ephemerality of time-based media.

I seek to illuminate hidden presences of long-gone people and the echoes of events at sites in memoriam. I work at the locations of homicides that led to traumatic impact on my family, and I explore the brutal landscapes of my early childhood. I am fascinated with the power of memory and the passage of time. The dead speak to us through the traces of their lives, and landscapes are full of their sleeping stories. My motivation is tremendous love, and grief for all that is gone.
As a visual artist, I see myself as a mediator. I see nature is the greatest belonging we have. Through digital medium, I draw the sight as I see, and share the emotion as I feel. Dance, as I see it is a magic language, which beyond all languages we speak. The fully embraced enjoyment is so nature. It creates a bridge of our mind and our body. It is as nature as breath that goes through our life.

In Gravity, I try to reveal a balance between contemporary dance and Tai Chi. Explore the beauty of movement, which derives from inner power, the 'Chi', the gravity of nature. In those movements, they attract and be attracted, resist and be resisted, and somehow, pass the power next to each other like the ups and downs of life.

zhuxiaoyuan.com
Since 1965, The Friends of Art at Indiana University has supported students in the Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts through a wide variety of artsbooks and textbooks in all fields of interest. Donations to the organization and profits from Bookshop sales fund annual scholarships for IU Fine Arts students, and provide additional support to the Grunwald Gallery, the IU Art Museum, and the Fine Arts Library.

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Thank you to everyone who helped create this catalog—your hard work and commitment has made it possible—and to all those who donated to the fundraising efforts: students, faculty, businesses, the FAGSA members who worked the auction and everyone who attended, and to David Orr (designer), David Harper (essayist), and Brandie Roberts (Graduate Services Coordinator).

Enjoy,
The FAGSA Officers
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2012 MFA THESIS EXHIBITIONS

GRUNWALD GALLERY

March 27–April 7
Gallery Talk
Noon
March 30
Reception
6:00–8:00 pm
March 30

Erin E. Castellan
Lauren Duffy
Feng Liu
Kelly Franké
David Katz
Payson McNett
Rachel Weaver

April 10–21
Gallery Talk
Noon
April 13
Reception
6:00–8:00 pm
April 13

Amanda Lee
Kevin Steele
Matthew Meers
Marla Roddy
Adams Puryear
Ben Tinsley
Kimberly Waite

April 24–May 5
Gallery Talk
Noon
April 27
Reception
6:00–8:00 pm
April 27

Sara Brown
Gatis Cirulis
Terrence Heldreth
Galatea Kontos
Beth Parker
Shane Rodems
Xiaoou Sun

IU ART MUSEUM

March 28–April 8
Gallery Talk
6:00 pm
March 30
Opening
6:00–8:00 pm
March 30

Audim Q. Culver
Andrew Maurer
Kasey Ramirez
Xiaoyuan Zhu

April 11–22, 2012
Gallery Talk
6:00 pm
April 13
Opening
6:00–8:00 pm
April 13

Spencer Corbett
Sara Lowthian
Neal Anthony Pitak
Corinne Preston

April 25–May 6
Gallery Talk
6:00 pm
April 27
Opening
6:00–8:00 pm
April 27

Julie Dhondt
Sharon Lindenfeld
Leyla Salamova