

MANIFEST™ v55



5th Annual **MASTER PIECES**

MANIFEST™

CREATIVE RESEARCH GALLERY
AND DRAWING CENTER

volume 55

5th Annual
MASTER PIECES

MANIFEST is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

MANIFEST VOLUME FIFTY-FIVE

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Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center

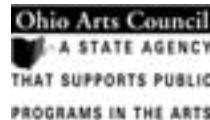
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July 8 - August 5, 2011

Curated by Jason Franz

Martin Arnold

*Current Graduate Student
University of Mississippi*

Curtis Cascagnette

*2011 Master's Degree Recipient
Bowling Green State University*

Ben Cowan

*2011 Master's Degree Recipient
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Caleb Dulock

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Daniel George

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Jacquelynn Sullivan

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Michigan State University*

Tanner Young

*2011 Master's Degree Recipient
University of Nebraska*

JenMarie Zeleznak

*Current Graduate Student
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Since its formation in 2004 Manifest has had at the core of its non-profit mission the goal to engage and bring together students pursuing a degree in the visual arts. Each year Manifest's exhibits and studio programs bring scores of students and professionals together, share their work with the public, and document it for posterity. To date nearly 100 academic institutions across the U.S. and beyond have been represented in Manifest projects by student work. *Master Pieces* adds another layer of depth to our programming, expanding upon that offered by the *Rites of Passage* exhibits for undergrads. This fifth installment of the *Master Pieces* project reveals and celebrates the intensity and professionalism of students working towards their terminal academic degree in art.

Often the most exceptional work comes out of the graduate student's immersion in an advanced culture of study and intellectual pursuit. Manifest's goal, therefore, is to select works that in the truest sense of the word are contemporary masterpieces – works that set the standard of quality that the artist is expected to maintain throughout his or her professional career. This exhibit catalog serves as documentation of these artists' own benchmarks for years to come.

This 5th annual Master Pieces was open to submissions by current graduate students, or those who received their graduate degree in 2010 or 2011. One hundred and twelve artists submitted 300 works for consideration. Of these, twenty five works by these sixteen artists representing eleven colleges and universities were chosen by a jury of six for exhibition and documentation in the full-color catalog. Five of these artists are from within 200 miles of Cincinnati.



Christina!, oil on panel, 36" x 48", 2010

Martin Arnold

Current Graduate Student, University of Mississippi

The focus of my work is centered on the figure. For me, true figurative art transcends mere representations of beauty. It appeals directly to that innate curiosity, that fascination that we all exhibit for others. Frequently, involuntary, often barely perceptible gestures speak more honestly and enthusiastically than our words, revealing our true thoughts and feelings. It is this honesty and enthusiasm that I draw on as I attempt to elicit an emotional response through my work.

In my figurative painting, I strive to establish a genuine presence. I choose to speak softly, preferring to let the eloquence of the human figure communicate my subject's mindset. It is not enough for the viewer to remain passive, simply observing; I want them to feel engaged by my subject, reflexively speculating about the same things that I pondered as I stood before my model, brush in hand, "What is going on inside this person's head?"... "What is he/she feeling?"... "What do we have in common?"

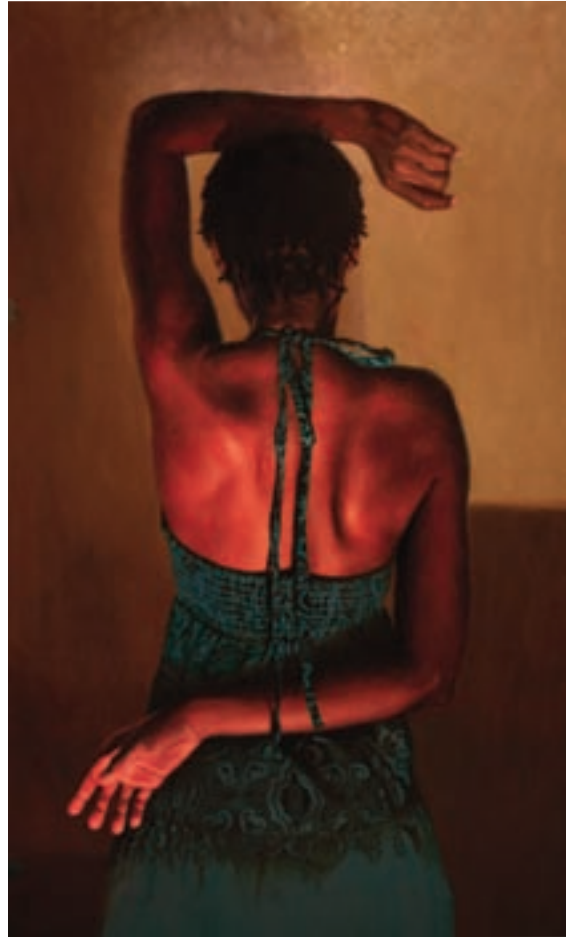
While achieving physical likeness is important, my primary goal is to infuse each painting with my subject's psyche, exploring and exposing each one's uniqueness and simultaneous commonness. It is this apparent contradiction, this pervasive duality that compels each of us to probe those around us and then extrapolate our findings to our own condition and to that of our human race as a whole. Thus, another human becomes the flesh and blood mirror in which we may glimpse our own psychological reflection. What we learn of others ultimately serves to reveal us to ourselves.

At the time that the painting is being executed, it is all about the interaction between the model and me. Facades dissolve and are supplanted with a strong sense of amity. While this psychological familiarity that exists between model and artist is unique, it is all too temporary; it endures only so long as the work is under development. Once completed, pretense is re-established and the painting, that allegorical 'offspring' of our professional collaboration, becomes the sole-surviving artifact. Suddenly, the emphasis on the model and the artist undergoes an abrupt shift, it now becomes all about the viewer and the subject of the painting. It is at this point that the artist becomes unnecessary—all but invisible.

I want viewers to sense, consciously or otherwise, that my subjects are intimately aware of their presence, their gaze—as they find themselves being silently, irresistibly pulled into an intuitive, non-verbal dialogue. I want the viewer to sense that the interest is mutual, as my subject responds with the same scrutiny and curiosity. Thus, the viewer becomes incrementally immersed in an environment that I have created: face to face with a fellow human who is different but similar, comprehensible and yet enigmatic. As viewers 'read' my subject, I am fully aware that they may arrive at personal interpretations that ultimately reveal more about their own feelings and emotions than are actually being expressed by my subject.



Princess, oil on panel, 40" x 24", 2010



Nicole, oil on panel, 48" x 24", 2011



Two Removed, oil on canvas, 30" x 38.5", 2011



Curtis Cascagnette

2011 Master's Degree Recipient, Bowling Green State University

It is by comparing something with its opposite that we come to a more capable understanding of its meaning. Is it possible to release the definition from the tension with its opposite? The Buddhist practice of yoga is a good example of one mystical solution to this: by becoming still for hours, one can experience the needs of the body and supersede it simultaneously. The tangible, the real, becomes questionable. As a result, transcendence is experienced. The question then becomes: is it possible to depict this?

My solution is to paint representationally, and to paint from life. Direct observation is different from using the photograph because the body's sense of space and the visual information is not distorted and fixed through the lens of the camera. Instead it is processed through binocular perception and then filtered through human consciousness. However, painting from life poses several problems even before perception can take effect—reality itself in a state of flux. For example, lighting can change from day to day. Also, when setting out to paint a self portrait, I change from day to day. Some variables are controlled, such as regulating the use of natural or artificial light and elaborately marking my position and the object's position. Still, change occurs. It is in this context that I confront the subject, which is the artwork and my experience.

Two, oil on canvas, 22.5" x 57", 2010-2011





Ben Cowan

2011 Master's Degree Recipient, Indiana University

I look and gather inspiration from everything around me. The paintings are hoarded compartments of landscape and thoughts about life and community. The paintings tell stories with layered meaning. Stories about growth and death, people being together, people's interaction with nature, and a spiritual world being revealed through these actions.

I make the paintings from imagination applying the views of my Bloomington, Indiana, neighborhood to compositional structures borrowed from religious painting and modern abstraction.

I interact with the world using my eyes and my hands. I use accumulated scraps available in my studio like leftovers in the fridge. Surfaces in the paintings build into visual and tactile reconstructions of nature. Or, forms flatten to emphasize the landscape's similarities to domestic patterns. In each work, I play and discover comparing materials and application methods to reinvent the familiar and infuse it with meaning.



Dead Ends, acrylic, saw dust, tea leaves on wood, 48" x 48", 2011

Caleb Dulock

Current Graduate Student, University of Texas at Arlington

In my current work I investigate the disjointed and bizarre narratives that form from memory and experiences to talk about the struggle, folly, and sacredness in fatherhood.

As part of my studio practice I employ the use of various reclaimed building materials and theatricality, both physically and digitally, of which are derived from childhood experiences of playing make believe and building forts and obscure inventions from my father's scrap materials. I find the confusion of scale to be important in regards with the pieces I produce to talk about the feeling of being childish in both physical and psychological terms. The idea of self-sufficiency and the concept of invention also play large roles in my research to try to understand the fundamental question of "who am I?" The composite photography work of Jerry Uelsmann has been instrumental in the development of my work, but more importantly, becoming a new father this year has radically influenced the scope of my research. Resting Place is a developing dialogue about sons becoming like their fathers, but also becoming fathers themselves.

To get to the answer of "who am I?" requires deep excavation into the soul. To know the depths of who you are begins by putting the shovel to the ground to see what is truly underneath it all.



A Resting Place, giclee print, 20" x 28", 2011

Daniel George

Current Graduate Student, Savannah College of Art & Design

The contemporary landscape is detailed and intricate. It is divided into segments that are separately owned and diversely maintained. Through photography I am exploring these unique subsections that form this complex environment. I am observing and recording these characteristics to better understand the makeup of my surroundings. I am interested in learning why particular locations are given such special attention. I am focusing on variations of land, which reveal an individual's personal reflection of and relationship to the environment. Their interconnection is conveyed through directly manipulating and placing objects within the landscape. Often, the attempt is to emulate an ideal natural world. I am especially drawn to interactions that are distinct and whimsical. I view these spaces as types of sub-landscapes, which when assembled depict an eccentric man-made world. These images are my contemplation of artificial environments whose quirky intricacies describe the formation of the modern landscape.



West Bay Street, archival inkjet print, 20" x 25", 2011





Into the Dark Lodge, cedar, fir, steel, beeswax, thread & nails, 50" x 40" x 20", 2011

Terrence Heldreth

Current Graduate Student, Indiana University

Objects have always fascinated me. Toys, tools, furniture, sculpture and sacred objects draw me in and make me question what it is that makes us human. How do the tools we use define us? How does the furniture we choose affect our lives? Where do we choose to draw the line between sculpture and tool, sculpture and furniture, sculpture and the sacred?

In my work, I seek to pose some of these questions. By creating objects of use, some fictional, some appropriated, some merely decorative, I am creating a dialogue with made things and how we relate to them. In our every interaction with our manufactured world, and what little remains that has not been manipulated by humankind, we define our time, our place, and ourselves.

As an artist, I explore some of the ways that we relate to and are defined by the objects around us, both those manipulated to our ends, and the increasingly rare objects and places that are untouched by human hands. In these interactions, I seek to help define and express the things and experiences that make us human.



Andrew Hendrixson

2011 Master's Degree Recipient, University of Florida

My practice is informed by a sources ranging widely from the writings of Flannery O'Connor and Thomas Merton, to the astutely intuitive quilts of Gee's Bend.

"Blue", a title taken from a short story by Flannery O'Connor, is part of a larger series entitled, *On the Poetic Accumulations of Inefficient Time Spent*. This work, as well as the others in the series, seeks to make a distinction between habit and ritual; the frivolity of the former countered by the intentionality of the latter.

The painting is created by the dense layering of paint and hand sewn remnant fabric. In the piece itself, as well as the practice by which it is made, I desire to lend credence to notions of inefficiency and labor, to elevate these notions and infuse them with the gravity of ritual.

I believe it is intentionality that can transform even the most banal daily tasks into meaningful, well spent time, and I hope to show that in the right light even the mundane is magnificent, the commonplace full of consequence.



The Enduring Chill: Blue, oil & handsewn fabric on canvas, 71" x 67" x 2", 2011







William McMahan

2010 Master's Degree Recipient, Indiana University

I find nothing to be more expressive or evocative than the figure. Humans, animals, or suggestions of either are what interest and engage me the most as a viewer and as an artist. I have studied figure drawing and anatomy for years, and I am fascinated by subtleties in form and gesture, and by how emotion may be manipulated through slight shifts in posture or expression.

The subject of my recent prints is isolated and highly textured figures existing in indeterminate, expansive spaces. The figures are often off-balance, contorted, and constrained, sometimes by their environments, or more commonly by their own anatomy. Some of the figures are static and appear to be decaying and rotting, while others actively move about or grow new appendages.

I have been considering the figure itself as a landscape in my recent work, and the textures that I create within the figures are suggestive, but open to numerous interpretations regarding their origins and surface qualities. The largely voided backgrounds emphasize the figure, while simultaneously isolating it.

Figure Study 29, drypoint on copper, 15" x 12", 2011

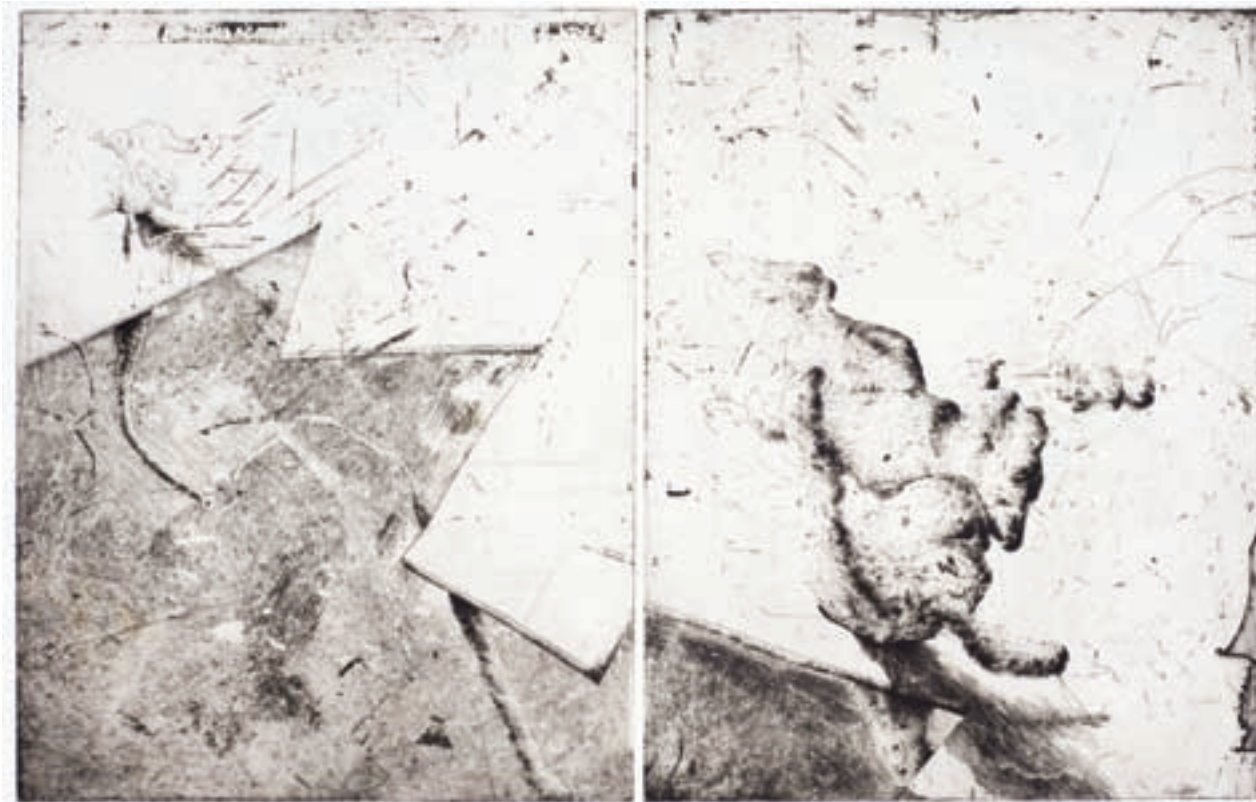


Figure Study 28, etching & aquatint on copper, 18" x 24", 2011

Payson McNett

Current Graduate Student, Indiana University

Contrasting the organic with the manufactured, I question my position between the industrial and the natural world. At the core of my work is an appreciation of both machinery and nature. The clash of the two creates an internalized conflict resulting in often simple forms that imply organization, repetition, pattern, scale and architecture.

I have worked extensively in ceramics, screen printing, silver and bronze casting, metal fabrication and wood-working. My foundation allows me to combine media in pursuit of a personal style and substance in my work.

A good deal of my art involves asking questions. I look into ideas and issues that are of personal interest. This sustains my creative activity and motivates me to work toward a goal. This also creates a learning environment that helps me further understand the questions I am asking. With my art I don't believe in giving answers but, rather, giving viewers the opportunity to answer questions.



Transition, laminated birch plywood & 3D printed gypsum, 5" x 7" x 24", 2011





Dunes, laminated birch, 6" x 8" x 26", 2011

Joshua Ostraff

Current Graduate Student, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

As a boy I lived for a time in the South Pacific Islands of Tonga. One night I waited on a small fishing boat for a larger boat to take me back to the main island. I looked up and saw a bright and endless sky of stars I had never seen before. The calm sea reflected almost perfectly the stars above. The things I never knew existed till then mesmerized me. Years later I looked up at the sky above Minneapolis, Minnesota, seeing only a few stars. I knew the sky was full of them but the city lights dimmed the potential of seeing them. This painting is about relocating a childhood memory, a memory I decided I didn't want to forget.



I've never seen stars like that, acrylic, 24" x 36", 2010

Ethan Pope

Current Graduate Student, University of Minnesota

For the last three years I have been working on a project called “Voice to Vision,” which is a collaborative undertaking to help genocide and holocaust survivors and the children of survivors explore and share their experiences through the process of making art.

This drawing is based on the real-life experiences of Hong, a Cambodian Genocide survivor. Hong told the Voice to Vision visual research team about the evening he and his two sisters hid in a rice field from the Khmer Rouge, the ruling party in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. The Khmer Rouge’s efforts at socially engineering the Cambodian people resulted in the genocide of approximately two million Cambodians. To create a purely agrarian-based Communist society, the Khmer Rouge targeted city-dwellers and educated people, like professors and students, and forced them to work in collective farms or labor projects. They investigated Cambodian families and killed anyone who wasn’t considered “socially appropriate.” The drawing is called “Pink Scarves” because the Khmer Rouge customarily wore pink and white farmer scarves so that they would appear to be farmers, sympathetic to the working class.

Hong and his two younger sisters and older brother fled from their village because they suspected that the Khmer Rouge in their village had been making inquiries about Hong’s family. Hong and his siblings decided to travel to the next village because they were acquainted with people there and knew they would be able to find food. A couple of hours before dawn they were walking along a path through rice fields toward the next village. In the distance, they saw three Khmer Rouge soldiers traveling toward them on bicycles. Hong and his sisters immediately got off the path and waded into the waist-deep water, taking cover behind the tall grass and bushes lining the rice field. Hong’s older brother stayed on the path to meet the Khmer Rouge and lie to them about what he was doing there in order to allay their suspicions. Hong’s brother knew that there was going to be a work-related meeting in the next town on the following day, so he told the soldiers that he was

traveling to the next village to attend that meeting. As Hong crouched behind the bushes with his sisters, listening to his brother speak with the soldiers, he saw leeches covering his and his sisters' bodies, but his sisters stayed quiet and didn't cry. After interrogating Hong's brother for a quarter of an hour, the soldiers moved on. If Hong had been seen that night, or if he'd made a sound, he and his siblings could have been killed. When Hong describes his memory of the incident, he says: "It's a frightening scene. We could die there. They all have guns. Kids or no kids, they don't mind killing."

After the incident, a Cambodian family who knew Hong's family took care of Hong and his siblings. Hong and his siblings remember the incident vividly and whenever they visit each other, they talk about it. Hong's brother and sisters are living in Cambodia now and are doing well, and Hong works in Minnesota in home care for the elderly and for children with special needs.



Pink Scarves: A True Story of a Genocide Survivor, graphite on paper, 11" x 15", 2011

Benjamin Rogers

2011 Master's Degree Recipient, Arizona State University

My paintings concern the drama of the human experience, specifically exploring themes of vulnerability through isolation, emptiness and contemplation. My work is narrative in nature and utilizes the human figure in an attempt to connect the viewer to the psychological and emotional space of the painting. My images are made intentionally ambiguous, leaving opportunities for audiences to imagine the missing pieces of the story and ultimately construct their own narrative. In this work, "If I Become Cheap, You'll Respect Me," I was interested in the vulnerability inherent in the pose, the strange sense of unease created by a figure in a waterless tub, and the figure's slight sense of gender ambiguity.



If I Become Cheap, You'll Respect Me, oil on canvas, 59" x 35", 2011

Ellen Siebers

Current Graduate Student, University of Iowa

My recent body of work is one which revolves around the awkward, disconnected, violent and loving relationships that exist between humans and the natural world. As a child I often displayed the inability to recognize the order and requirements of nature. This disconnect is still evident in my life as I often mirror the same delusions of my adolescence.

The figures are often references to historical figures, which I adopt while reading biographical accounts of when natural and human worlds collide. I am interested in stories of expeditions in which assumed knowledge of conditions ultimately failed the members involved.

The figurative references ultimately serve as a vessel for self exploration. I extrapolate stories from the lives of these references and interject my own experience of disconnect to create the myths of my life. The inherited narratives are meant to circulate around a visceral moment experienced, not a sequential event. The drawing line leads the way through the paintings, working to dissect and restrict the figurative from the natural elements, while also working to reveal a personal iconography.



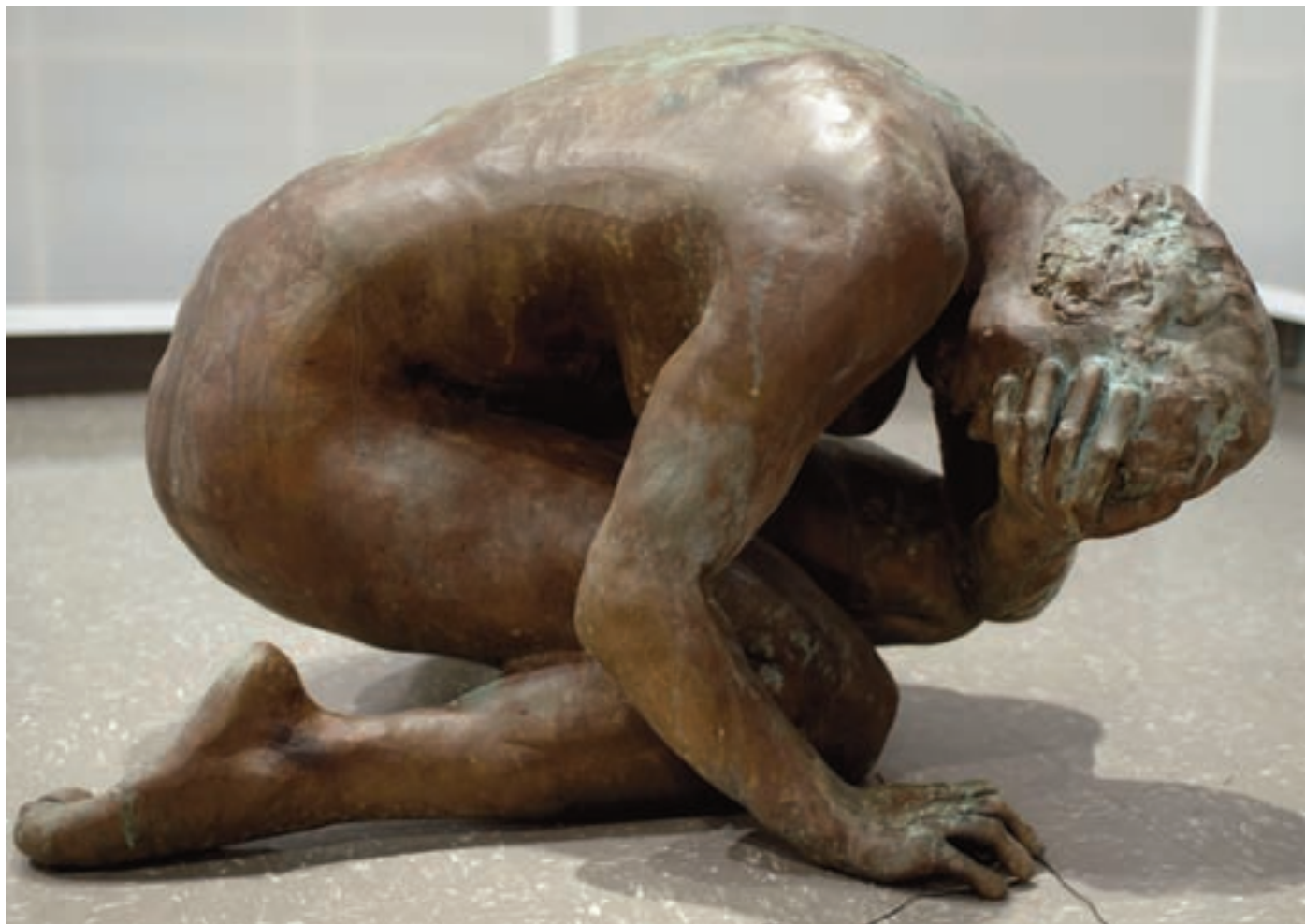
The Awk/The Orchard II, oil on canvas, 30" x 40", 2011



The Northern Lights II, oil on canvas, 26" x 30", 2011



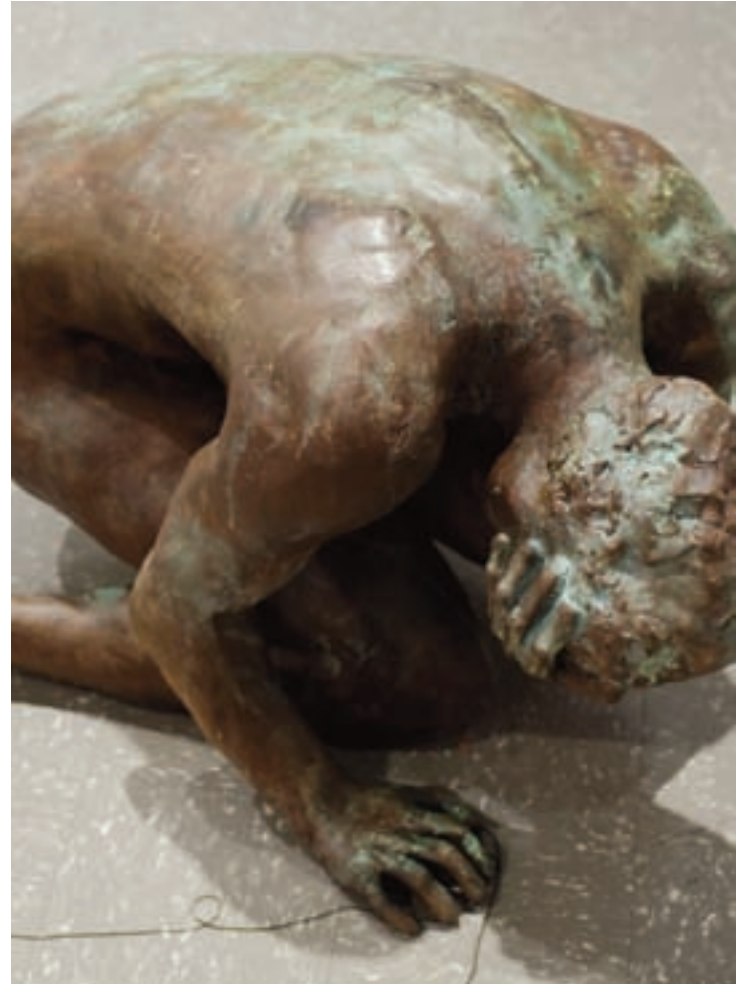
The Awk/The Orchard I, oil on canvas, 24" x 30", 2011



Jacquelynn Sullivan

*2011 Master's Degree Recipient
Michigan State University*

By isolating a moment, my work embraces the struggle of experience, when you have reached a point in life of either falling to the ground or standing back up. Existing in a place where either is possible, my figure explores the vulnerability we experience while watching illness consume a family. It reveals the balancing act we endure while fear, anxiety and loss fill our bodies as we witness the emotional turmoil that forces our life to change.



Beyond Distortion, silicon bronze, 21" x 33" x 22", 2011

Tanner Young

2011 Master's Degree Recipient, University of Nebraska

With a voice comes a story. Stories morph with each retelling. This relates to sculpture; these objects operate as markers. They tell a loose story, but function more as a description of an environment, an attitude or perception. They mark a certain place in time, a feeling. Objects hold a presence. A reminder of when and where, how and how much, and why is that there?

Because Ty left it there, now help me move it.

The work presented is composed of raw beliefs and curious fixations. These truths open memories and start a stumbling internal dialogue. Stories and lived events surface in the form of objects and installations.

Navarro County: a bread truck shows up at people's houses and takes all their tools and four wheelers. It doesn't even leave a screw driver.

The truck is intriguing, and is a blunt force that plainly does wrong. It operates without a set of directions. Satellites and Google maps aren't needed here. It is like the storm that blows through doing its damage, and the next day everyone drives around to see what happened.

I remember perfecting the low sweeping motion. Extensive searches were carried out with that white and green metal detector. Those childhood discoveries of artifacts and rusty hinges allowed for a new interpretation of the backyard.

A pair of pliers and a dinosaur are the same thing, except for one being smaller than the other.

Stories such as this fit a need, and give insight about the person telling them, about a time period, people, and their lifestyles. Sculpture is in itself an absurdity, but makes the most sense. Physically and lyrically, it allows experiences to be recalled, our realities to merge, and for the routine and familiar to become new again.

A voice is truly unique and individual. Sculpture functions in this realm. It is an entity that feels alive, and here. The physical can be owned, but the environment, spark, and charisma cannot; it is public domain. The memory of the experience is the true ownership.



Pull That End, wood & steel, 43" x 84" x 53", 2009





JenMarie Zeleznak

Current Graduate Student, Savannah College of Art & Design

My work is concerned with relationships that manifest between the self and the other through social and emotionally driven experiences engulfed in uncertainty, desire and illusion. I seek to find a means of expression for the emotional space I find myself in and that I create from. As an artist I find myself in a constant state of conflict as I move between the roles of maker and viewer. As a viewer I feel moved by the images I create. As a creator, I am constantly in anguish as my inner critic renders the creative process excruciatingly painful. Throughout my work, I portray and project myself onto the animal as a means to explore the damaged psyche. The animal is rendered into isolation, so as to focus inward on absence of connections and unfulfilled desires. I attempt to give an intangible force a voice through a subject that is essentially unable to speak for itself. My work engages moments within, between, around and beyond the self in search of answers to questions unasked.



I Have a Feeling, That You're Feeling Less These Days, watercolor pencil on paper, 30" x 46", 2011



To Never Feel Our Wings Melting No. 2, watercolor pencil on paper, 72" x 47", 2011



I Already Know What It's Like to Die, or So It Seems, watercolor pencil on paper, 72" x 47", 2010

About Manifest

Founded in 2004 by professors and students from area Universities, Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization headquartered in the historic urban neighborhood of East Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. The 1000 square foot museum-quality street level gallery offers three distinct exhibition spaces, and is minutes away from downtown Cincinnati, and the numerous academic institutions of higher learning in the region. Its central location in the Woodburn Avenue district and DeSales Corner places it within an energetic, creative, and revitalizing community that includes other galleries, shops, restaurants and artists' studios.

The gallery benefits from its location within easy walking distance of a historic neighborhood populated by residents from all walks of life. The galleries are free and open to the public five hours a day, five days a week, presenting works of all kinds by student and professional artists from around the world. The Manifest Drawing Center Studio is located in nearby Madisonville.

Manifest is supported by grants and public donations and has the goal to support student professionalism, integrate the arts into the urban residential community and raise the bar on artistic standards. The mission also includes the exploration of the relationship between art and design, as well as the ongoing support and display of drawing in all its various forms.

Mission

Manifest stands for the quality presentation, experience, and documentation of the visual arts, engaging students, professionals, and the public from around the world through accessible world-class exhibits, studio programs, and publications.

Manifest Gallery

...a neighborhood gallery for the world.

Manifest Press

...take every exhibit home.

Manifest Drawing Center

...because learning to draw is learning to see.

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