



MFA Thesis Exhibition 2013

chance

March 16-April 6, 2013

University Art Gallery
Stony Brook University

Introduction

Creating art is an ongoing dialogue between the traditions set by preceding generations and the need for today's artists to respond to an ever-changing cultural and social landscape. Each generation also responds to new technologies, alternative techniques, and the stubbornness of the media in pure or hybrid forms. But the work is nothing without the driving passion to create a dynamic conversation between the work and viewer. You may find the work draws you in or leaves you in a state of detached contemplation. Regardless, the artists in the MFA exhibition know that your engagement is instrumental to completing the work of art.

The Master of Fine Arts at Stony Brook is a three-year, terminal degree, providing a few gifted artists (we allow no more than twenty candidates in residence) who are ready to begin professional careers with an opportunity to hone their skills. Our graduate students enjoy the use of our excellent technical facilities (foundry, kilns, darkrooms, presses), and focus on their own work in individual studios on campus. Additionally, they have the advantage of being part of a large, world-class research university with centers not only in Stony Brook but also in Manhattan, Southampton, and East Hampton, where our Department administers the historic Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. Through their close interaction with our faculty--all successful, practicing artists--and their many contacts in the New York City art world, they develop the techniques that will allow them to express their personal vision. Stony Brook is also uniquely situated geographically: we are near enough to New York, with its renowned museums, galleries, studios, and concert halls, to make recurrent visits easy; yet we are sufficiently far to enjoy insulation from the density and pressures of the city in the relative peace provided by the suburban/rural environment of Long Island's North Shore. Our students do not spend their lives in the studio, however. They are encouraged to increase their breadth of knowledge by engaging with faculty in Art History, Philosophy, History, Women's Studies, and the Humanities Institute; they participate in the Department's affiliation with the Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture, and Technology (cDACT); and they establish creative connections with other students in Computer Science, Music, and Theatre.

What you see in the gallery today is the result of hours in the studio, working with faculty, and talking with each other as our students forge the future of the art world. We thank University Art Gallery Director Rhonda Cooper for her energy and sense of design in curating this exhibition by our graduating MFA students. You may find some of the work challenging, humorous, or simply beautiful, but all of it reflects a deep commitment to the making of art.

John Lutterbie

Chair, Department of Art and Theatre Arts



ABOVE
EZRA THOMPSON
"DEAD CAT" 2013
52 X 67" OIL ON CANVAS



ANDREAS RENTSCH

I HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN THE EXPLORATION OF THE ENTANGLEMENT OF FATE, GEOGRAPHY, AND POLITICS IN THE DIRECTION OF JUSTICE. I'VE BEEN PREOCCUPIED BY QUESTIONS OF ARBITRARY, RANDOM VIOLENCE CARRIED ON BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS, ETHNICITIES, CULTURES, AND VIEWPOINTS. MY PERSONAL HISTORY OF GROWING UP ON A PRISON COMPOUND WHERE MY FATHER WAS THE WARDEN HAS DEEPLY INFORMED MY UNDERSTANDING OF THESE COMPLEX REALITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS.

MY WORK IS CREATED BY OUTLINING MY PERFORMANCES USING TRADITIONAL BLACK AND WHITE CHEMICALS THAT ARE APPLIED BY HAND ONTO X-RAY FILM. THE METHODOLOGY IS VERY MUCH PART OF THE MEANING, AS THE RESULTING SHAPES, FORMS, AND DENSITY ARE NOT FULLY REVEALED UNTIL THE FILM HAS DRIED AND IS TREATED FOR PERMANENCE. ITS TEMPORALITY BECOMES A METAPHOR FOR OUR OWN UNPREDICTABLE EXISTENCE AND IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROCESS AS THE "EVIDENCE" OF MY ACTIONS IS OFTEN REVEALED AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OR WEEKS OR IS COMPLETELY DECONSTRUCTED BY THE CHEMISTRY. THE X-RAY FILM BECOMES A REVELATORY TOOL, EXPOSING HIDDEN APPEARANCES, ALMOST LIKE A FORENSIC EXPERT UNEARTHING CONCEALED TRUTHS UNDER THE LAYERS.

LEFT

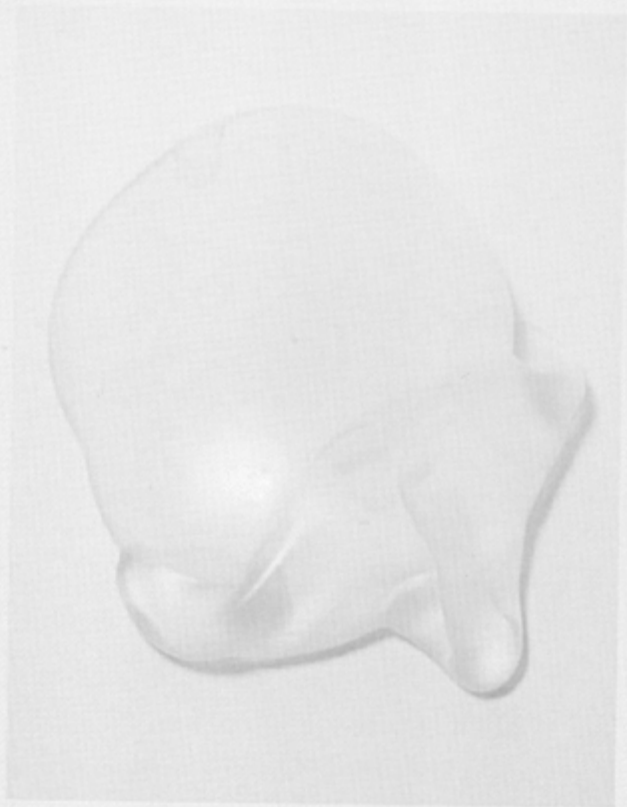
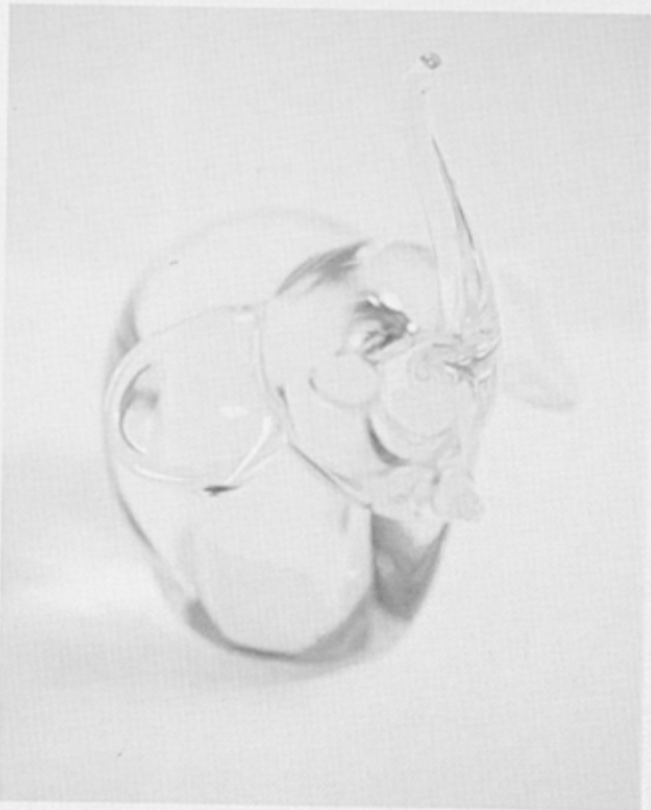
ANDREAS RENTSCH

"UNTITLED" FROM X-RAY SERIES 2012

70X80" BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO CHEMICALS ON
X-RAY FILM

NICOLE ROBILOTTA

IN MY RECENT WORK I HAVE BEEN PONDERING THE IMPORTANCE OF AND SENTIMENTAL VALUE OFTEN ATTACHED TO PERSONAL SMALL CRAFT COLLECTIONS. I HAVE BEEN INTRIGUED BY THE OBSESSION AND PROTECTION SURROUNDING THESE KITSCHY DELICATE OBJECTS AND THE ABSURDITY HIDDEN BEHIND THEM. IN MY PROCESS OF APPROPRIATING THESE OBJECTS I DESTROY THEIR FAMILIAR FORM IN ORDER TO SHARE THE NEGATIVE REACTION I HAVE TOWARD THESE PIECES. THIS METHOD ALSO CHANGES THE OBJECT'S MEANING AND OUR PERCEPTION OF ITS VALUE.





LEFT
NICOLE ROBILOTTA
"ELEPHANT IS, WAS?" 2012
MELTED GLASS

ABOVE
NICOLE ROBILOTTA
"TEACH ME HOW TO PLAY BALL" 2012
3D CERAMIC COLLAGE



CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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Stony Brook
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The 2012-2013 University Art Gallery exhibition schedule is made possible by a generous grant from the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation. Additional funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Friends of Staller Center. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping us present our exhibitions to our students and faculty as well as to the local and regional community.

I also want to express my appreciation to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Joe Esser, Pat Moran, and Pete Pantaleo, for exhibition assistance; Olga Lomshakova, Curatorial Assistant; Erin Day and Jay Schuck, Gallery Assistants; Skylar Benatar, Zaret Bullones, Lauren Caponong, Sarah Farage, Caroline Han, Farah Khandaker, and Holly Rogan, Gallery Interns; Liz Silver, Staller Center Production Manager, Liz Lamendola, Technical Director, and the Staller Center Technical Crew for exhibition lighting; and Aubrey Szczygiel, Gallery Secretary.

Most of all, I want to thank Andreas Rentsch, Nicole Robilotta, and Ezra Thompson for a very exciting MFA exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper
Director

Front cover artwork:
Andreas Rentsch
"Untitled" from X-ray series, 2012 (detail)
70 x 80" black and white photo chemicals on X-ray film

Catalog design by Nicole Robilotta
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